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LEADERS OF CHRISTIAN AND  
ANTI-CHRISTIAN THOUGHT.

119185

BY

ERNEST RENAN.

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## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.



THE present volume is the first of a series it is intended to publish of the fugitive pieces that have been contributed, from time to time, by Ernest Renan to the columns of the *Revue des deux Mondes*, the *Débats*, and other French periodicals, bearing on the subject of religion and its history. The series shall bear the general title of "Studies in Religious History," and the present volume the specific title, "Leaders of Christian and Anti-Christian Thought." In the seven volumes of Ernest Renan, already published by the Temple Company, under the general title of "Origins of Christianity," viz.—(1) The Life of Jesus; (2) The Apostles; (3) St Paul; (4)

The Anti-Christ; (5) The Gospels; (6) The Christian Church; (7) Marcus Aurelius, or the End of the Old World—the English reader has placed before him, for the first time, a complete view of the history of Christianity, from its earliest inception, down to the first half of the third century of our era. The object of the present volume is to set before the reader, in a series of sketches, some of the more important phases religious thought has assumed in the centuries which lie between the middle of the nineteenth and the middle of the third respectively. To this arrangement it may be objected that it is a reversal of the chronological order; which latter, no doubt, has its advantages, especially in a historical survey; chronology being generally regarded, and most properly too, as standing in the same relation to history as the chart does to the mariner; still, as this volume does not pretend to give a connected historical account, but merely a series of historical (or, more strictly, biographical) sketches, it has been

deemed advisable to begin with the phases of religious thought the best known, and proceed by easy stages to the more remote and presumably least known. But the reader is at liberty to follow the chronological order, if he prefers it to the one here adopted, without being put to any very great inconvenience. A chronological table has been added to the table of contents, and he has only to refer to this to enable him to begin at any date his fancy or his convenience may dictate.

Secondary to the object just indicated, the Translator was desirous of investing the present volume with that peculiar interest which attaches to the form of literature known as biography. The following studies, therefore, in addition to their historical value, are strictly biographical. They give us a picture of the lives of men who have left their imprint on the age in which they lived, and especially on its religious thought. By studying the lives of these great men, as presented to us by M. Renan, the reader will be able to explain, to

himself at least, why it is that, in the present day, religion assumes so many faces, even amongst its most earnest and uncompromising votaries.

WM. M. THOMSON.

# LEADERS OF CHRISTIAN AND ANTI-CHRISTIAN THOUGHT.

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## CHANNING AND THE UNITARIAN MOVE- MENT IN THE UNITED STATES.

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PROTESTANTISM is destined to share the law common to things human; I mean, of living and developing without ever attaining a fixed point and a permanent state. This is its privilege, or, if it is preferred, its curse. If it can be believed that there is here below a complete system of revealed truth, given once for all, it is clear that Bossuet was right in his pompous *History of the Variations*, where he represents this perpetual mobility as the assured sign of error. Although, if we assume on the other hand, that no religious or philosophical system can pretend to an exclusive and absolute value, it is evident that we must commend him who possesses in himself such store of flexibility that it can accommodate itself to the progress of humanity, undergo modifications with it, and to pursue it to ever new consequences and to an unknown goal. This tendency of Protestantism towards a more and more purified religious ideal, shows itself here under two quite distinct aspects, according to the divers genius of the two great divisions of the Reformation. Germany, on its side,

applying to theology its profoundness of mind, its lofty imagination, its marvellous aptitude for critical research, had, at the end of the last century and at the commencement of the present one, arrived at one of the grandest and most poetical religious forms that it is given to one to conceive. That was but for a moment; but what a moment in the history of the human mind, a moment when Kant, Fichte, and Herder were Christians, when Klopstock sketched the ideal of the modern Christ, in which was raised that marvellous edifice of biblical exegesis, a masterpiece of penetrating criticism and of exalted rationalism! Never were there so many and such great things evolved in the name of Christianity; but vagueness and indetermination, the essential condition of poetry in religion, condemned this fair apparition to endure but for a day, and to leave no deposit for the future. The schism of the diverse elements which were for a moment conciliated in its bosom was not long in manifesting itself. Pure religious sentiment resulted in a narrow pietism, rationalism and criticism, in negative and destructive formulas, somewhat analogous to those of our eighteenth century. Catholicism, ever on the watch to profit by every defection, invaded the territory at every point.

The English race, from its side, in Europe and America, devoted itself to the solution of the great problem presented by the Reformation, and in its own manner pursued the formula of a Christianity which might be acceptable to the modern spirit. But she carried into that work neither the force of intellectual faculties, nor elevated poetry, nor the liberty of criticism, nor the searching and vast science which Germany alone in our day has been able to apply to religious questions. Great integrity of mind, admirable singleness of heart, an excellent moral sentiment, were the gifts with which that serious and strong race sought Christ. Unitarianism, a sort of



compromise, somewhat analogous to that which the deacon Arius attempted in the fourth century, was the highest outcome of its theology; a few excellent practical maxims, a truly evangelical spirit, in the highest sense that it is customary to apply this word, compensated for what was lacking in its work, of poetry and profoundness. We may say without hesitation that from this direction have emanated the most excellent lessons in morals and in social philosophy that have until now been heard of in the world. Administered by good solid natures, strangers on the one hand to artistic refinements and caprices, on the other to the exigencies and the scruples of the savant, the honest and sagacious school of which we speak has proved at once how greatly diverse are the gifts of mind, and how widely separated are the views of genius from the practical wisdom which labours efficaciously for the amelioration of the human species.

Channing, whose name, quite new among us, already combines so much sympathy and precocious admiration, has been unquestionably the most complete representative of that exclusively American experiment—of religion without mystery, of rationalism without criticism, of intellectual culture without elevated poetry,—which seems to be the ideal to which the religion of the United States aspires. If he was not the founder, Channing is indeed the *Saint* of the Unitarians. The reports which reach us from America show us that the opinion of his sanctity increases from day to day, almost bordering on legend. A sudden fascination has attracted to his writings a certain number of the *élite* of souls in France and England. We can hence only applaud the idea which has drawn a publicist and one of the most distinguished savants, M. Laboulaye, to lend his name to the introduction amongst us of these excellent writings. The remarkable essays of

M. Laboulaye, published in the *Journal des Débats*, have already, in France, called attention to the name of Channing, and inspired in enlightened minds the desire to know more intimately the master whose renown has spread over the whole of America. The volume<sup>1</sup> of the translations which we announce responds to that desire: it contains the most excellent portion of the works of Channing, his writings on society. At the beginning of a religious phenomenon really peculiar to our times, and which seems assured of a great future, it is well to study with the sympathy that good and fine things deserve, but without decided predilection, the personality of this illustrious reformer, and to ask what part his ideas may be called upon to play among us.

## I.

William Ellery Channing<sup>2</sup> was born at Newport, in the state of Rhode Island, the 7th April 1780, of a respectable family in easy circumstances. It cannot be said that his education was in any way remarkable, nor that the circle in which he was brought up was particularly well suited to develop a mind with a great speculative bent. Newport was a commercial city, and a place of favourite resort, and the very details into which his biographer ingenuously enters in order to describe the society that was found there give us a poor enough idea of it. "Rich merchants," says he, "marine captains retired from the service, and others, attracted thence by considerations of

<sup>1</sup> *Œuvres Sociales de W. E. Channing*, translated from the English, preceded by an essay on the Life and Doctrines of Channing, and by an Introduction by M. E. Laboulaye, Member of the Institute.

<sup>2</sup> The biographical details which follow are taken from the *Memoirs of Channing* (New York), a collection full of interest, and which enables us to penetrate to the very bottom of the soul of Channing.

health, formed a gay and even a refined society. The presence of English and French officers during the War of Independence gave a finishing touch to manners; we must add, too, that through the influence of French liberalism, and the licence of speech so commonly indulged by seafaring people, impiety was widely diffused throughout almost all classes." We can, with difficulty, comprehend how, in the midst of merchants and retired officers, far from the great centres of instruction, one of those powerful and lofty individualities could be formed, to which we give the name of genius. In fact, we perceive from the first where Channing, later on, would show his deficiency: I mean, in that mental refinement which comes from contact with an aristocracy of intellect, and which intercourse with the people is better calculated perhaps to develop than the society of the middle class.

To a man especially devoted to intellectual employments, this would indeed be an irreparable *lacune*; but to a man like Channing, destined to a wholly practical mission, it was perhaps an advantage. It must be acknowledged that the qualities of subtlety and flexibility which are acquired by a varied culture of the intellectual powers would only impede the sweeping movement of an apostle. By dint of seeing the different sides of things, we become undecided. The good no longer fires with enthusiasm, for we see it compensated by an almost equivalent dose of evil. Evil always disgusts, but no longer irritates as it should: for we get accustomed to regard it as a necessity, and sometimes even as the condition of the good. The apostle ought not to be cognisant of all these shades of thought. The virtuous Channing owed perhaps to his sober and somewhat indifferent education the advantage of preserving all his life the energies of all his moral tendencies, and the absolute bent of his convictions. He possessed that happy

privilege of virtuous minds—of walking on the verge of the abyss without experiencing giddiness, and of viewing the world at so small an angle that one can never be terrified at its immensity. In speculation he never advanced upon the Scotch school, the wise moderation of which he carried into his theology. He knew but little of Germany, and that he only half understood. His literary ideas and his scientific knowledge were those of an instructed and cultivated man, but he was destitute of any special gift of penetration or originality.

On the other hand, upon all questions of a social, moral or political order he began to meditate very early, and that, too, with much force. The idea of communism, the first, and by consequence the falsest, that presents itself to the thoughts when one commences to reflect upon the reform of human society, crossed for a moment his mind; nay, he was even tempted to join himself as minister to a company of emigrants whose principle was community of goods. His childhood and youth were harassed by great perturbations, which contrasts very strangely with the profound calmness of the rest of his life. Forty years after this period of trial, it recurred gently to his thoughts, and he spoke of it in these terms: "I lived alone, devoting myself to the forming of plans and projects, nobody being under the same roof with me except at the hours when I gave lessons: then I worked as I have never done since. There being no human being to whom I could communicate my thoughts, and eschewing ordinary society, I passed through intellectual and moral combats, by reason of troubles of both mind and heart, which were so vivid and absorbing that they deprived me of sleep, and sensibly affected my constitution. I was reduced almost to a skeleton, nevertheless, it is with pleasure that I recall those days of isolation and of sadness. If ever I aspired with my whole

soul towards purity and truth, it was indeed then. In the midst of rude combats, this great question rose within me: 'Shall I obey the highest or the meanest principles of my nature? Shall I be the victim of worldly passions, or the child and the servant of God?' I remember that this great conflict went on in me, and none of those who were about me so much as suspected what I passed through."

His reflections on religion led him very early into a profound dissent from the Established Church, and a strong antipathy to the absolute and terrible doctrines of Calvinism. His indignation against this "vulgar and frightful theology," as he calls it, breaks out in every page of his writings. His whole theology is henceforward summed up in these words, "God is good." The austere views of religion which people regard as favourable to piety, seemed to him a cruel severity which diffuses a melancholy, casts obscurity over God, over the present life, over the life to come, and by its sadness leads fatally to the superstitions of Paganism. "English theology," he wrote about 1801, "seems to me altogether of very little value. To me an Established Church seems to be the grave of intelligence. To impose a fixed and unvariable creed is to build prison walls round the soul. . . . The timidity, the coldness, the dulness which generally marks all books of theology, is principally to be attributed to the cause we speak of." And some years after, he writes: "I know that Calvinism is embraced by many excellent men: but I know, too, that on some hearts it has the saddest effects, that it spreads impenetrable darkness over them, that it begets a spirit of servility and fear, that it chills the best affections, that it checks the most virtuous efforts, that it overthrows sometimes the seat of reason. The influence of this system on sensitive minds is always to



be dreaded. If people could believe it, they would find in it grounds of discouragement that would run even to madness. If I and all my dear friends, and all my race have come from the hands of God totally depraved, irresistibly drawn towards evil and detesting good; if but a portion of the human race can be saved from this miserable condition, and the remainder must be condemned to endless and eternal flames by the Being who gave us a perverse and depraved nature, then, in my judgment, there remains nothing but to lament in anguish of heart; existence is a curse, and the Creator is—I dare not say what. O merciful Father, I cannot speak of Thee in the terms which this system suggests! No, Thou hast given me too many proofs of Thy kindness to allow such a reproach to pass my lips. Thou hast created me to be happy; Thou hast called me to virtue and to piety, because in virtue and in piety happiness consists, and Thou dost not expect from me what Thou hast not made me capable of accomplishing.”

The religious condition into which Channing thus found himself drawn was a doctrine very similar to that of the Arians and Pelagians. He did not regard man as wholly corrupted by sin: he did not see in the Christ the incarnate God, descended to the earth to bear the burden of our transgressions, and to purchase our justification by his own sufferings; but neither did he regard man as being in a normal condition, and as advancing naturally towards goodness. In Jesus Christ he did not see merely a person of superior religious genius, who by means of a delicate temperament and under the stimulus of his national enthusiasm had attained to the most perfect union with God. He rather fell in with those who consider the human race to be actually degenerated by an abuse of free will. In Jesus Christ he recognised a sublime being, who had wrought a crisis in the

condition of humanity, had renewed the moral sense, and touched with saving power the fountains of good that were hidden in the depths of the heart of man.

These doctrines are very similar to those of Unitarianism, which, at the time we speak of, had in America quite a number of churches. Channing joined the Unitarians, and, at the age of twenty-three, accepted the position of pastor, which he exercised for the rest of his life in the Federal Street Church, Boston; but he never carried into his pastorate a sectarian or party spirit. His aversion to all official establishment convinced him that even the broadest of sects was much too narrow. There is hardly one of his sermons in which he does not recur to that fundamental thought: "I beg of you to remember," he said, "that in this discourse I speak for myself alone. I do not give you the opinions of any sect; I give you my own. I alone am responsible for what I say; let no one listen to me in order to find out what others think. I belong, it is true, to that society of Christians who believe that there is but one God, the Father, and that Jesus Christ is not that *unique* God; still, my adhesion to that sect is very far from being entire, and I do not seek to attract to it new proselytes. What other men believe is of little importance to me. I can listen to their arguments with pleasure, but I am at liberty to accept or reject their conclusions. True it is, I cheerfully take the name of Unitarian, because people have attempted to decry it, and because I have not so learned the religion of Christ as to recoil before the reproaches of men. If that name was more honoured than it is, I should probably take pleasure in rejecting it, for I fear the chains that party imposes. I wish not to belong to a sect, but to a community of free minds which loves the truth, and will follow Christ on this earth and up to heaven. I desire to

escape from the narrow bounds of any particular Church, in order to live under the open heaven, in the full light of day, regarding from a distance everything around me, seeing with my own eyes, listening with my own ears, and pursuing the truth resolutely, however arduous or solitary the path it leads to. I am not, then, the mouthpiece of a sect; I speak for myself alone, and I thank God that I live in times and in circumstances which makes it a duty for me to open my whole soul frankly and unreservedly."

The real originality of Channing rests in this idea of a pure Christianity, freed from all bonds of sect, in his aversion to all spiritual despotism, though freely accepted, in his hatred to that which he calls a *degrading uniformity of opinions*. No one has ever found stronger words in which to condemn official faith and discipline; no one has better understood that a truth which does not proceed from a man's own heart, and which is applied as a kind of exterior form, is inefficacious and without moral value. The verb to believe is repugnant to Channing. He sees in the obedience exacted by faith a remnant of the old system, which rested upon fear, and upon the suppression of individual consciences by the constituted authority. He thinks that it is more preferable to raise up a few evil passions than to perpetuate slavery and lethargy. Unity, such as it has been understood by the Church from the beginning, appeared to him henceforth impossible to pursue. Unity in variety is with him the law of the Church of the future, and he cherishes no fond dream that Catholicism, imposed by a clergy distinct from the faithful, and retaining for itself the monopoly in matters of religion, shall be displaced in the future by a universal communion of Christians animated by pure love.

This liberal and exalted tolerance is the one thing which most delights Channing, and which draws from him the noblest utterances, which we cannot



do better than to quote. "Your chief duty in lieu of belief," he says, "may be summed up in two precepts: *Respect those who differ from you; respect yourselves.* Honour men of different sects. Do not imagine that you have the exclusive privilege of truth and goodness. Never consider the Church of Christ to be confined within the limits of human invention, but as comprehending all sects. Honour all men. At the same time respect yourselves. Never suffer your opinions to be treated with contempt, but, as you would not impose them upon any one, let it be seen that you revere them as the truth, and that you expect the respect and the courtesy of those who converse with you on that point. Place yourselves always on terms of perfect equality with every sect, and do not embolden any one by your timidity, to take up towards you a tone of dictation, superiority, or contempt."

One singular consequence of this wide indefiniteness, of this exclusion of all exclusiveness, was to render him especially tolerant of the most intolerant of all religious societies. He saw around him Catholicism calumniated, semi-persecuted, and he loved it. The lively sympathy which he conceived for the writings of Fénelon, the influence of the pleasant recollections which Cheverus had left behind him in the United States, and, above all, the advantage which, in his eyes, Catholicism had in not being official in the country in which he lived, determined his ideas in that sense. He feared the future of the Catholic propaganda in England, in particular the Oxford movement, because he saw in it a reaction of the individual conscience against the Established Church. He was indignant against theologians who were alarmed at the progress of Catholicism, and who fancied themselves as infallible as the Pope. "Do they not perceive," said he, "that if men must choose between two infallibilities, they will choose

the Pope as the most ancient, and the one which is upheld by the greatest number of voices? This system cannot have endured for so long a time, nor have extended to such a degree, without having some deep root in our nature. The ideas and the words of *Church* and *antiquity* have a powerful charm. Men, in their weakness, ignorance and indifference, enjoy the shelter which they find in a vast organisation which time has consecrated. Let us be strong and proud when we are supported by the multitude, by a great name, and by the authority of ages. It is not surprising that the Church of Rome revived at that moment, when an unhealthy fear of innovations reacted against the spirit of reform, constraining men to look at the past. This Oxford movement has many opportunities of being extended, because it seems to be less the work of a police, or of the ambition of the clergy, than of a real fanaticism."

Such was Channing for forty years in his Federal Street pulpit. Possessed by an exclusive idea of the good, he saw little beyond that supreme aim. He visited Europe, which he did not understand, nor sought to understand. His exterior life was simple and gentle. In France, where every exceptional vocation which is consecrated to things divine is placed outside the pale of common rights, and implies celibacy, it would be a strange spectacle to see one who is an apostle, a saint, living the life of an ordinary person: the empire of vulgarity is so strong amongst us that no young woman would consent to espouse a Channing. No untoward incident crossed that calm and serene existence. The imperturbable optimism, which constituted the whole of his religion, never deserted him for a moment. "The earth," said he, "becomes younger with years, man better with age." During the last summer that he passed on earth, it was asked in his presence at what age we should place the happiest period of life. He smiled, and

answered that it was *about sixty!* He had already reached that age. He died soon after, in October 1842, without pain or regret, just as the sun was setting—the hour that he had always loved, and which he deemed as sacred. He even avowed that as he had advanced in life he had been more and more happy. “Life,” he wrote, “seems to me a gift which acquires every day a greater value. I have not found it to be a frothy and glittering bubble on the surface; it only becomes insipid in proportion as we measure it. In truth I detest that superannuated comparison. Life is a blessing to us. If I could see others as happy as I am myself, what a world ours would be! This world is good, in spite of the obscurity which surrounds it. The longer I live, the more I see the light pierce through the clouds. I am certain the sun is above us.”

## II.

It was by accident that Channing became a writer. His works bear no trace of literary ambition. There is not one of them that exhibits the least pretension to art or style. Channing is an evangelical minister, and a preacher. His works are simply sermons, spiritual letters, or articles which appeared in a religious journal—*The Christian Examiner*. The idea of writing a book did not come to him until very late, and happily he did not carry it out. The plan of such a work would have neither been new nor original. Like so many others, it would have been an *essay* upon man and human nature, the invariable theme of the Anglo-Scotch philosophy. I am indeed inclined to believe that the essay of Channing would have been no exception to the weariness of those sort of books—excellent though they be for certain degrees of intellectual culture, but which teach nothing, and are

of very little value, since history and general studies on the development of the human species have almost caused to be forgotten that miserable philosophy.

If Channing is not an author, neither is he, any more, a scholar or philosopher. He lacks information, and his historical knowledge is all at second or third hand. He does not possess that delicate feeling for shades of thought which we call criticism, lacking which there is no insight into the past, nor, consequently, any extended knowledge of human affairs. It is astonishing to witness to what extent the English in general are destitute of that intuitive historical gift so richly bestowed on the Germans, so largely possessed by some minds in France, provided the matter in hand is not a too remote antiquity, nor an intellectual state differing largely from our own. At the present moment, even, antiquity is still taught at Oxford as it was taught with us at the time of Rollin, and perhaps less well. In certain departments of political history this moderate penetration may produce works that are respectable and true enough; but in the history of literature, religion, or philosophy, which is destined to become more and more the great history, and to throw into the shade that which was formerly called by that name, it requires a quite different power of divination, and such is its importance that researches of this kind have attained in our day, that we can no longer be either thinker or philosopher without possessing this quality. Happily, one can very well be an honest man without it. And this is what Channing was by pre-eminence, and to a degree almost amounting to genius, which is of a thousand times more value than mere talent. As with all men born for the practice of virtue rather than for speculation, he has few ideas, and these few are simple. He believes in revelation, in the supernatural, in miracles, in the prophets, and in the Bible. He seeks to prove the divinity of Christianity by arguments

which differ in nothing from those of the old school. This puritan, who "higgles" so ardently in regard to his faith, is at bottom very credulous in all that belongs to history: the fault of his not being broken in to the intellectual gymnastics which results from long practice on the problems of the human mind.

At the same time that he lacks critical acumen, Channing lacks also the sentiment of great originality. When we compare this excellent soul, this contemporaneous American saint, with those who like him in the past have been possessed with a zeal for the glory of God, or the welfare of their brother man, the first feeling is one of sadness and of chill. Instead of the splendid theology of the antique ages, instead of the great intoxication of a Francis d'Assisi, who speaks so powerfully to the imagination, we find ourselves here in presence of a respectable gentleman, very sedate, very well dressed; enthusiastic and inspired after his fashion, but without the brilliancy of the marvellous; devout, but without grandeur; noble and pure, but without poetry, unless it be poetry of a wholly domestic and private kind. Put far from us those paradoxes of incomplete minds which, because they have comprehended the beauties of the past, would like to reconstruct a vanished world with archæological regrets, as though the first condition of serious admiration were not to recognise each thing in its natural position, that is to say, in its epoch. The dazzling fantasies of ancient religions would only be chimerical in our days. We cannot produce a dream by an act of volition, and we cannot, without injustice, blame modern men for not having the qualities to which the man of credulous eras was indebted for his ignorance and simplicity. It would not be less unjust to reproach Channing with the tameness of his theology, inasmuch as this very tameness is, in questions of abstract speculation, a condition of



reasonableness. His theology is at bottom all that theology can be in the nineteenth century, and in America—level, simple, respectable, practicable; a theology on Franklin's pattern, with no great reach of metaphysics, nor transcendental vices. Those who appreciate a religion for its simplicity and its degree of transparency ought to be enchanted with this. It is certain that if the modern spirit is right in wishing for a religion which, without excluding the supernatural, diminishes it to the smallest amount possible, the religion of Channing is the most perfect and purest that has ever appeared.

But, in truth, is this all? And though the symbol should be reduced to a belief in God and in Christ, what would we gain? Would scepticism rest satisfied? Would the formula of the universe be more complete and lucid? The destiny of man and of humanity less impenetrable? Does Channing with his purified symbol escape better the objections of incredulity than the Catholic theologians? Alas, no! He admits the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and does not admit his divinity; he admits the Bible, and does not admit hell. He displays all the captiousness of a scholastic, when endeavouring to establish against the Trinitarians the sense in which Christ is the Son of God, and the sense in which he is not. Now, if we concede that he had a real and miraculous existence, from first to last, why not frankly call him divine? The one does not exact a larger amount of belief than the other. In truth, in this view it is only the first step which costs: we must not merchandise with the supernatural; faith is all of a piece; and, the sacrifice once made, it is not becoming to take back in detail the rights which, once for all, have been fully conceded.

This, in my opinion, would be the narrow and contradictory side of Channing. What sort of a rationalist is he who admits miracles, prophecies, a

revelation? Of what use is it to tell me that this revelation ought to be judged by reason, and that in case of conflict reason must be preferred? Every stopping-place in rationalism is arbitrary. The fact of this revelation, which at the start we are to assume as demonstrated, is, moreover, the essential point which it is necessary to establish; and, in view of the demands of modern criticism, this cannot be said to be a thing easy of accomplishment. We then find ourselves brought back to diversity of opinion, the remedy for which is sought in a theory of revelation. Now, if it can be supposed that there is an absolute formula of truth, how can we hope to arrive at it by individual efforts? How can confidence in one's own judgment be pressed to the extent of ascribing to ourselves infallibility, and believing that we shall find the fixed point, which no one has yet reached?

I am aware that I am here addressing to Channing the objection which the Catholic theologians address to Protestantism in general. It is, in fact, only the argument of the Catholic controversialist; a very feeble argument, or rather no argument at all, when it is addressed to that Protestantism which is nothing but Spiritualism attaching itself to the great tradition of Christ, and has always appeared to me unanswerable as against that section of the reformed church which aspires to possess the apparent vigour of Catholicism without its chains. When Protestantism fails to reach out to a religion purely rational, it seems to me illogical. That this inconsequence is excusable and often honourable, I would be the first to admit; but it must be avowed that, if Protestantism aspires only to displace one set of dogmatic beliefs by another, it has no longer any *raison d'être*: Catholicism, in that event, is much to be preferred to it. Channing never attained to a perfectly clear statement of his own thoughts on this

point. If, on the one hand, he preaches the most entire liberty of creed, on the other, he stops far short in this of pure criticism. When he rouses himself energetically against the established church, he by no means renounces the hope of finding the true form of evangelical doctrine. If he bids one search for oneself, he never once imagines that one can be carried by independent research outside the pale of Christianity. And yet, if we admit the fact of a revelation made at a particular moment in history, if we grant truths divinely manifested, and, consequently, binding on the conscience of him who regards them as revealed, wherein consists the difficulty of recognising an outward establishment, a Church teaching by supernatural illumination? A miracle wrought eighteen hundred years ago is no harder to admit than a miracle which is perpetrated in our own generation. Catholicism can justly say to Channing, "You are no more liberal than I am, and you submit to an authority much less obvious; you submit to the Bible, as for me, I obey the Church." For my part, I own I would rather accept the authority of the Church than the authority of the Bible. The Church is more human, more living: immovable though it is supposed to be, it yields more readily to the needs of each epoch. If I may be permitted to say so, it is more easily brought to listen to reason than a book which has been closed for eighteen centuries.

Channing never saw very clearly that the remote, if you please, though inevitable consequence of admitting a revelation, is the admission of an authority to interpret it. In other words, the admission of Catholicism, the political institution of religion, born of Rome, as understood by the nations, is very properly repugnant to him; but, from the fact that such a system leads fatally to sloth and indifference, have we any right to conclude that the less difficult religion of the southern nations (and



France is becoming a southern nation more and more) has not also its ideal? Because these people, instead of apprehending religion as an endless pursuit, go to it merely for repose—because, averse from trouble, they relish at their leisure a religion that is offered to them ready made, is that a reason for excluding them from the Kingdom of God? Who knows that they are not wiser, after all, than they who seek after theological truth? If they do not debate the problem, is it not because they have a vague and instinctive feeling that it is insoluble? The Catholic, taking the dogma, as time has fashioned it, and without searching into its depths, is, in one sense, nearer a high philosophy than the Protestant, who is incessantly in quest of a pretended primitive formula of Christianity. If it were possible to give a proper direction to the every source of opinion in the Church, the Catholic method of leaving the dogma to be shaped by the current of prevailing ideas, and by a kind of tacit understanding among believers, would be a good deal more profound than the appeal to a fixed revelation, in which people feel bound to find one faith for all ages.

As a matter of course, the soul deeply penetrated with the sanctity of religious things, will cry out against this eternal religious remnant of Roman Paganism, which commands not faith, but respect. I shall always remember tenderly the deep horror expressed to me by an American missionary, who had just attended an official ceremony at the Madeleine. That profane pomp; those uniforms in the holy place; the places marked as in a theatre; all that distraction which assuredly was not of God; that crowd, in which nobody thought of praying—all left on him the impression of a frightful Paganism. A laudable sentiment this, to be sure, and I hasten to say that my sympathies are all

with earnestness and tenderness of conscience. But, on the other hand, it cannot be denied that Paganism has not very deep roots among certain races, and exacts a certain measure of concession. If an abstract, purely monotheistic religion were the best for all men, no religion would be comparable to Islamism. Catholicism, by its varied mysteries, and especially by its worship of the Virgin and the Saints, meets that need of outward demonstration and of plastic art which is so strong in the south of Europe. Besides, it is in the nature of an official religion to make a less imperious demand on belief, precisely because it stands only as an institution to which one can adjust oneself without yielding to it an absolute faith, just as obedience to the laws of the State does not necessarily involve a belief that they are the best in the world. Hence it happens that, at bottom, countries that are rigorously Protestant, where religion is taken up as a very serious matter, are almost as intolerant—for the freethinker, at least—as Catholic countries; hence, finally, comes the singular fact that Catholic countries above all, have been familiar with unbelief. Was ever a country less cramped by its religion than the Italy of the Middle Ages, and of the *Renaissance* before the Reformation? The philosophy of the eighteenth century could have had its birth only in a Catholic country.<sup>1</sup> These two things rank together, and are associated by a host of subtle analogies which we have no space here to enumerate.

<sup>1</sup>The opinion that the philosophy of the eighteenth century had its origin in the Reformation is erroneous. If this philosophy has antecedents, we must look for them in the Pagan Italy of 1500. Now, the Reformation is but a reaction against the Italian unbelief of that period. Need I add, however, that, in a more general sense, the Reformation claims a brilliant share in the work of liberating the human mind, and that every true liberal finds in it a branch of his ancestors.

Impartial criticism, while it comprehends and applauds the scruples of the American school, is not, therefore, obliged to share them entirely. It knows that everything on earth borders on good and evil; on one side, it sees religious indifference resulting from the official system; on the other, it sees individual aberrations resulting from the *mania theologica*. No doubt, if there were one absolute truth which could reward the efforts made to get at it, it would be incumbent to preach to all men research and examination; but, in good truth, can we hope to be happier than so many others, and to enjoy alone the privilege of receiving the veritable creed of the religion of Christ? In what way would it be of advantage to a country thus to indulge the passion of theological research? Northern Germany, I know, thanks to its entire religious liberty and to its marvellous aptitude for everything within the domain of thought, has perhaps accomplished the most beautiful feat in the history of the human soul. But does it appear that England and the United States, where everyone treats theology as a personal matter, possesses an intellectual culture superior to that of France, where no individual makes much of theology? Is the habitual reading of the Bible—a necessary consequence of the Protestant system—of itself so great a good? and is the Catholic Church so very culpable in having set a seal upon the book and hidden it from sight? Certainly not; and I am tempted to say that the most significant stroke of policy on the part of that great institution was its substituting life and activity in place of a dumb authority. The Hebrew literature is no doubt admirable in itself, but it is only of value to scholars and critics who can study it in the original, and who can grasp the true sense of each of the fragments which compose it. As for those who admire it on trust, they most often

admire in it something which it does not contain; the real original character of the books of the Old and New Testaments escapes them. What is to be said of the semi-lettered people who, without the necessary training, plunge into an antiquity so obscure! Can we imagine the confusion of mind that must result to simple and uninstructed people from the habitual reading of a book like the Apocalypse, or even like the Book of Kings! We know the singular aberrations which resulted in England at the time of the revolution from that unwholesome meditation. In America, the source of such extravagances has not yet been cleared away. It is no doubt better to see people reading the Bible than reading nothing, such as takes place in Catholic countries; but we must likewise avow that the book might be better chosen. It is a sad spectacle to witness an intelligent nation using up its leisure hours on a monument of another age, and seeking all day long for creeds in a book where there are none.

The efforts of Channing to escape from that pressure of the Bible sometimes conduct him into singular struggles with received texts. Hell, as it is understood by the orthodox, is repugnant to his gentle nature. Hell, to him, is only the conscience, just as Heaven has no fixed place, and is nothing else than union with God and with all good and great beings. This I willingly admit; but how ingenuous to set about counting how many times hell is mentioned in the Bible, to note with satisfaction that that is only five or six times, and that a good translation might even find a means of getting rid altogether of that disagreeable word! That which is revealed is revealed altogether or not at all, and if a single word has come from God, it is not for man to soften it down to suit the progress of his reason. In history, we find the same per-



plexities. Channing is led to construct for himself a primitive religion, wholly ideal, to which it is our duty to return. "The religion," he says, "which was given for the elevation of man, has been made use of to render him abject. The religion which was given to create in us a generous hope, has been made an instrument of servile intimidation and of torture. The religion revealed by God, in order to enrich the human soul, has been employed to shut it up in the enclosure of a narrow sect, to found the Inquisition, and to light the piles of martyrs. The religion, given to render thought and conscience free, has served, by a criminal perversion, to bruise them both in order to subject them to the priests and to purely human creeds." This Protestant theory of an age of gold in Christianity, followed by an age of iron, in which the primitive thought has become obscured, is little agreeable. Christianity was never either so perfect as the Protestants suppose it at its beginning, or so degrading as they paint it in its decline. There is no one generation which, in its long age, can be taken as the ideal, as there is no one in which it has wholly failed in its mission. A critical history of the earliest origins of Christianity would exhibit the singular illusions which men have entertained respecting this primitive age—an age as yet so little known, because it has been but little studied, except in a party spirit, and with the intention of finding in it arguments for or against dogmas, the germs of which had then hardly any existence.

In general, Channing has lacked that which America has so far lacked—high intellectual culture, critical knowledge. He is not perfectly *au courant* of the things pertaining to the human mind; he does not know the general result of what is known to his age. As a religion of mind, his religion is not equal to that of northern Germany; as a grand institution, it is not equal to Catholicism; it demands too many sacri-

fices from criticism, and it does not demand enough from those who experience the want of believing. That the tendency of modern times seems to call for a religion of this kind, formed from the common residuum of all the faiths, after the elimination of the doctrinal peculiarities embodied in each, numerous facts would lead us to believe. The whole of Asia, for two or three centuries past, seems, by the simplification of its old symbols, to have arrived at Deism. India, tired of wandering in the labyrinths of endless sects, has reached the same result. Rammohun-Roy, the most illustrious representative of the Brahminic race in our age, died a Unitarian of the same stamp as Channing. Voltaire, translated into Guzarati, does service now in the controversies of Zoroaster's later disciples (become pure Deists) with the Protestant missionaries. Under the revolutionary movements of China, there is evidently concealed an appeal to monotheism, against the degradation with which the old cults of the Celestial Empire seem smitten. Is this, then, an indication which ought to show us that Deism is the final term in the evolution of humanity? That might be, if the human mind did not embrace, by the side of reason, instincts much more capricious. Religion is not merely philosophy, it is art; we must not, then, ask it to be too reasonable. That grain of fantasy, which we cannot destroy, will derange what appears to be the most rational combinations. The need of believing in something extraordinary is innate in man; a religion too simple will never satisfy him. Set up the most rigorous barriers; on the morrow caprices, particular credences, and shabby practices will again resume their sway. Faith demands the impossible; nothing less will satisfy it. To this very day, the Hindoos every year walk over glowing coals in order to attest the virginity of Draupadi, the common spouse of the five sons of Kourou.

## III.

The true mission of Channing was evidently altogether a moral one. His theology, like every tentative which aspires to resolve an insoluble problem, is very easily assailable; as to his morality, it can be praised without stint; it is in this that he is for us original and new. Nothing, in fact, in our European organisations can give us an idea of such an apostleship. In our eyes, the ardour of proselytism, which makes the apostle or the missionary, is worth nothing without a positive and complicated religion, charged with dogmas and observances. Here we have a Vincent de Paul, minus the devotion, a Cheverus, minus the priesthood. It is necessary to read the biography which Channing himself has given us of the Rev. Tuckerman, his master and his guide in this view of charity, in order to conceive of the mere form of laical sanctity, as the United States seems destined to reveal it to the world. The eminently English nature of Channing; his gentlemanly delicacy; his optimism, too, which made the sight of evil a real torture to him, rendered his charitable ministry all the more meritorious. "My spirit seeks the good, the perfect, and the beautiful," he writes. "I cannot without a sort of agony bring vividly before my imagination what man suffers for his own crimes and for the cruelty of his brothers. The utmost perfection of art, expended upon horrible or purely tragic subjects, cannot reconcile me to those subjects. It is only from a sense of duty that I read in the newspapers the records of crimes and misfortunes. . . . You see I have little of the stuff of a reformer in my constitution."

But I know nothing in our time that equals these beautiful and noble moral discourses, and this lofty way of talking of social questions. The problems

which have troubled the human mind among us, and the solution of which is not yet reached, are all resolved in Channing's mind by charity, by respect for man, by the belief that human nature is good, and that, in its free development, it tends to good. Never did anyone more fervently believe in progress, in the beneficent influences of knowledge and civilisation amongst all classes. Channing is a democrat, in this sense, that he acknowledges no nobility but in virtue and work, that he sees no salvation for humanity save in the intellectual cultivation of the masses of the people, and their adoption into the bosom of the great civilised family. "I am a leveller," he wrote in 1831, "but I would fain accomplish my mission by raising those who are in the lowest rank, by rescuing the labourers from the poverty which degrades, and from the ignorance which brutalises them. If I understand the meaning of Christianity and philanthropy, there is no precept more clear than that."

In politics, Channing has little penetration. He is liberal, and, what is very rare, liberal from motives of religion. The revolution of 1830 gave him lively joy. He learned the news at Newport, and repaired immediately to Boston, in order to exchange felicitations with the friends of constitutional liberty, and to impart from the pulpit the hopes which filled his heart. He was greatly astonished to find only a feeble echo to his enthusiasm, and he cursed more vehemently than ever the torpor of opinion caused by worldly interests. In particular, the coldness of the young men surprised and affected him. Recalling the processions and bonfires of his early youth, he could not comprehend how the free men of America could view with indifference the reappearance of Lafayette, the calm firmness of the people, and the future of liberty which seemed to be opening for Europe. One evening, towards this



period, he met a person whom he knew. "Well, sir," he said, in a tone of sarcasm which was not habitual with him, "are you also too old, too wise, like the young men from college, to have any enthusiasm to show in honour of the heroes of the Polytechnic school?" "Sir," replied his interlocutor, "you seem to me to be the only young man that I know." "Always young for liberty," responded Channing, in a ringing voice, and grasping the hand of his friend.

Noble sentiments these, at which one should never blush. And yet, Channing's political and social ideas, so simple, so excellent, so pure, are they any more exempt from criticism than his religious ideas? The people who realised the ideal of Channing, would they really be a perfect people after the model of a high civilisation as we conceive it? This is open to doubt. It would be an honest people, orderly, composed of good and happy individuals; it could not be a great people. Human society is more complex than Channing supposed it to be. In presence of calamities, such as those of the Middle Ages, we permit ourselves to think that the one thing essential is to render life as little as possible unhappy; in presence of mere laxity like that we behold, we easily fancy that the work of social reform might consist in giving to the world a little honesty; but these are limited views, conceived under the pressure of momentary necessities. Man is not placed on the earth merely to be happy, nor is he placed here simply to be honest; he is here to accomplish great things through society, to attain to nobleness, to sancity, as Christianity called it, and to outgrow the vulgarity in which the existence of almost all individuals drags on. The least inconvenience in Channing's world would be that people would die of weariness there; genius would be useless; great art would be impossible. The Scotch Puritan of the

seventeenth century best represents to us the dream of the Unitarians—a sort of ideal after the fashion of Israel, where everybody should know the Bible, reason out his faith, discuss public affairs; where drunkenness should be unknown, where no one should hear an oath. But with what very precious gift has the Scotland of the seventeenth century enriched us? Would not God have been better adored if, at the risk of a few jarring words, more great and beautiful things had been produced? Italy, its very opposite, is certainly the country in which Channing's ideal has been most faintly realised; in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Pagan and immoral delivered over to all the transports of passion and of genius; next, dejected, superstitious, hopeless; now sombre, irritable, destitute of wisdom. And yet, if we must see Italy sink with its past, or America with its future, which would leave the greatest void in the heart of humanity? What is the whole of America as compared with one ray of that infinite glory with which towns of second and third rank in Italy—Florence, Pisa, Siena, Perugia—all are aglow? Before they can hold a rank in the scale of human grandeur comparable to these cities, New York and Boston have a great deal to do, and I doubt if they will succeed in approaching it through total abstinence societies, and by the propagation of the pure Unitarian doctrine.

Convinced, with good reason, that the perfection of human society consists solely in the improvement of the individual, Channing fastens passionately on details which do honour to the delicacy of his conscience, but the minuteness of which provokes a smile. He saw clearly that intemperance was the principal cause of the misery and the coarseness of the lower classes; whence he concluded that to attack that, to cure intemperance, would be to attack social evil at its root; a great portion of his life and efforts

were, in fact, devoted to this undoubtedly praiseworthy labour. But, really, would a people that drank nothing but water be the greater for it? Would it illustrate a more beautiful page in human history? Would it reach a higher standard of art, of thought? This habit of attaching a social importance to a thing which we can only regard as pertaining to individual morality, plainly shows the gulf which divides American thought from ours, and how difficult it will be for the old and the new world, pursuing such different aims, ever to embrace the same policy and the same faith.

Indeed, of the two modes of conceiving human progress, either as the result of the gradual elevation of the mass of humanity, and, consequently, of the lower classes, towards a better condition, or as accomplished by an aristocracy which supposes lying beneath it a vast abasement—Channing very decidedly attached himself to the former. Woe to him who would not follow his example, but would desert for outgrown prejudices the henceforth incontrovertible cause of modern democracy! But, taking this side, we should not be blind to the dangers of the path which democratic nations are treading, nor unjust to the entirely different way in which the past has understood civilisation. If we could once for all make up our minds to sacrifice a few in view of the necessities of the common work; if we admitted, as antiquity did, that society is essentially composed of some thousands of individuals living a full life, while the rest existed merely to procure this life for this small number, the problem would be infinitely simplified, and would be susceptible of a very much higher solution. We should not have to reckon a crowd of humiliating details of which democracy is compelled to think. The loftiness of a civilisation is usually in the inverse ratio of the number of those who share it; intellectual culture ceases the

moment it is anxious to spread; the crowd pouring into cultivated society almost always depresses its level. These are reflections which it is permitted to make without incurring the reproach of denying the most irresistible tendency of the present age; nay, we will add, that the peculiar character of France, a character by which we mean here neither to prove nor to disparage, does not allow us to suppose that the ideas of Channing could be applied there unless very greatly restricted.

These ideas, in fact, suppose, or at least aim at, creating an enlightened population rather than a grand culture. Now, in regard to intelligence, France is a country essentially aristocratic. The moral temper of France combines extremes: a common people generally below the average, and by the side of this common people an aristocracy of intellect, to which, probably, no other can be compared. Nowhere do we find at once so much mind and so little taste for liberal things. Education, as Channing understands it, would, among us, be too strong for some, too weak for others. In religion, Channing's ideas—and I mean no reproach to them when I say it—seem no better adapted to our country. France is almost destitute of religious spontaneity. Had France been capable of originating a religious movement of its own, it would have become Protestant. Never will circumstances be as favourable as they were in the sixteenth century, never will more heroism be displayed. Well, France—we must say it with regret—rejected Protestantism as uncongenial to its nature. France is the most orthodox country in the world, for it is the most indifferent to religion. To innovate in theology is to believe in theology. Now, France has too much mind ever to be a theological country. Heresy has no business there; the only heresiarch it has produced—Calvin—met with no success until he passed its frontiers. It is greatly

to be feared that the miserable abortiveness of all the attempts which have been proposed more recently to modify the forms and the spirit of Catholicism among us is an indication of the fate reserved for undertakings of the same kind in the future.

In religion, as in everything, France desires the universal, and cares little for the delicate and the distinguished. Precisely because of its profound piety, it loves not the small sects, the separatists, the religions of chapels and cliques which the English race so greatly delights in. Religious controversy is bad taste in France; it does not comprehend how people can dispute about such matters. The argument against Protestantism which theologians draw from its perpetual divisions, and from the new sects it produces without ceasing (as if this were not really a sign of life and of religious activity, as if uniformity of belief were not almost always caused by mental abasement), this argument, I say, is considered in France quite decisive. This is the reason why, after every effort made to stir its indifference, France falls back more readily than ever into Catholicism or incredulity. This country is absolute in everything; it must have sharply-cut theses, which give it room to apply its rhetoric and to satisfy its taste for general declamation. The wise men see and desire something better; but the wise men are not of their country. The philosophy of the eighteenth century, which is something eminently French, is in one sense profoundly Catholic, though its universal tendency is lack of criticism, indifference to fine distinctions, and its claim to substitute another infallibility for theological infallibility.

We cannot hope, then, it seems to me, that the ideas of Channing are destined to gather a very large family of adherents amongst us. He under-



stood this himself. His letters to MM. Sismondi and de Gérando betray a constant mindfulness of France, and, in the midst of sentiments expressing a lively sympathy, let but little hope stream out. "I wish," he wrote to the latter, "to put a question to you, to which you will reply, I hope, with perfect frankness. Are the religious views unfolded in my volume in any respect applicable to the needs and to the condition of France? I am not sorry to read, in your letter, that the English sects do not succeed in extending themselves among you. They can give but a poor form of religion. For some time past, England has made but little progress in the higher truths. Her missionaries, if people listened to them, would force France backward three centuries. I think that religion when it shall revive among you, will appear in a diviner form. I think that France, after so many efforts after progress, will not resume the worm-eaten theology of the ages of antiquity." "I neither hope nor desire," he writes to M. Sismondi, "that Christianity should revive in France under its ancient forms. Something better is needed. . . . One of the greatest means of restoring Christianity is to break the habit, almost universal in France, of identifying it with Catholicism, or with the old Protestantism. Another method is to show how entirely it is in harmony with the spirit of liberty, of philanthropy, of progress, and to make it appear that these principles demand the aid of Christianity for their full development. The identity of this religion with the most expansive benevolence requires, in particular, to be well understood. Unless Christianity can fulfil all these conditions, I cannot desire its success." "Whence do we derive health?" asks he in another place. "This is a question which is perpetually rising before my mind. Does the world receive propulsion from individual reformers, or from new



institutions? Is the work accomplished by a silent action which is felt in the bosom of the masses? Or, again, are violent convulsions, overthrowing the powers that be necessary, as in the case of the fall of the Roman empire, to introduce reform worthy of that name? I fear sometimes that the latter means would be of little avail, so utterly corrupt do both the Church and State seem to me."

These doubts as to the religious future of the old world never were absent from his mind. He perceived that his liberal and untraditional Christianity, though suitable to a young country, which is founded, if I may say so, on another state of humanity, yet would be inapplicable to our old civilisation, where everybody is, after his own fashion, antiquarian. He was a thorough American. There, indeed, as it appears to us, his ideas will have an immense future. For the first time in the world, the United States is perhaps destined to realise an enlightened, purely individual religion, calculated to make men honest and wholly exempt from metaphysical pretensions. The name of Channing will no doubt be bound up in such a foundation, not as the chief of a sect (he would himself have been the first to repudiate such an honour), but as one of the men in whom the new movement first found its complete and attractive expression.

If the problem of the world could be solved by integrity of mind, simplicity and moderation of spirit, Channing would have solved it; but other qualities are necessary to this, and Channing, who may have received them from nature, as far as nature imparts them, was not placed in an intellectual centre where such ideas could be developed and made to fructify. But here let us say that there is nothing which can outweigh honesty, goodness and true piety, these inestimable gifts of great souls. When God formed the heart of man, he prematurely

implanted in it goodness, the essential characteristics of the divine nature, and to be the symbol of that beneficent hand<sup>1</sup> whence we have proceeded." Goodness by itself, however, does not suffice to unravel the problems of life. It is beautiful enough in its way—as a consolation in life, but not as a revealer of its secrets. To this, science and genius are as necessary as loftiness of heart and purity of soul. A world without science and without genius is as incomplete as a world without goodness. Channing understood but little of the former, and in this connection he was at fault in representing things to be so much more simple than they are in reality.

God knows that I would not discourage those noble-minded men who, being struck with the imperfection of our religious condition, desire reform, and endeavour to find a worship more adapted to their needs. Even when such efforts result only in ameliorating and consoling a few rare souls—is that not to be regarded as recompense enough? But I dare not hope for these such an expanded and really social movement. It does not appear that there is henceforth any room for new and original speculations in the field of theology, nor that the religious state of humanity is susceptible of changing in any notable manner. Buddhism, it is true, seems destined to disappear, while Islamism alone shall be eternal with the Arab race; but it is difficult to believe that the equilibrium of the three great branches of Christianity which centuries have founded (the Latin, or Catholic Church, the Greek, or Orthodox Church, and Protestantism), must henceforward pass through great trouble. Will the relations of philosophy to Christianity change here? Will one of these two forms of human thought succeed in absorbing the other? Or, again,

<sup>1</sup> Bossuet.

will a durable peace succeed in reconciling their contradictory aims? It is not to be thought of. Philosophy, as regards numbers, will also be in an insignificant minority, but it will be impossible to suppress it, unless, at the same time, we destroy civilisation. To maintain these rival powers in face of one another, not to discourage those who desire to reconcile them, and yet not to trust too implicitly in the reconciliation of enemies who are likely to fall out again to-morrow—this is the only programme which a truly critical mind can propose in these times. It would be unjust to reproach the past for not having practised a tolerance, which is only the result, good or bad, of the intellectual state to which we have attained; but it is not the less certain that liberty is the only religious code of modern times, and one can hardly conceive how, after being accustomed to regard one's belief in a wholly relative manner, humanity can habituate itself anew to accept them as the absolute truth.

## M. FEUERBACH AND THE NEW HEGELIAN SCHOOL.

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EVERY considerable evolution in the field of human opinions is worthy of attention, even when one does not attach any great value to the fund of ideas which are in question. It is in virtue of this that the man devoted to critical researches cannot avoid giving attention to the labours of the neo-Hegelian school on Christianity, although these labours do not always bear a strictly scientific character, and although the fantasy of the humorist has often more share in them than the severe method of the historian.

The antipathy of the new German school to Christianity dates from Goethe. Pagan by nature, and, especially by literary method, Goethe had little taste for the æsthetics which substituted the *gausape* of the slave for the toga of the freeman, the sickly virgin for the antique Venus, and for the ideal perfection of the human body as represented by the gods of Greece, the emaciated image of a crucified man torn by four nails. Impervious either to fear or to tears, Jupiter was in truth the god of that great man, and we are hence not surprised at seeing him place the colossal head of that god in front of his bed, exposed to the rising sun, so that he might be able to address his morning prayers to it.

Hegel has not less decidedly pronounced in favour of the religious ideal of the Hellenes and against the intrusion of the Syrian or Galilean elements. The legend of Christ seems to him to be conceived on the

same plan as the Alexandrine biography of Pythagoras. According to him, it has passed into the most vulgar domain of realism, and on no account into a world of poetry: It is an agglomeration of paltry mysticism and ghastly chimeras, such as one encounters among whimsical people who are not endowed with a fine imagination. The Old and the New Testaments have, in his eyes, no æsthetic value.

It is the same thesis which has so often excited the nerves of Henri Heine. The learned school of pure *Germanists* (MM. Gervinus, Lassen, etc.), who, according to the ingenious expression of Ozanam, cannot pardon their Christian gentleness for having spoiled bellicose ancestors for them, has abounded in the same sense. But M. Louis Feuerbach<sup>1</sup> is undoubtedly the most advanced representative, if not the most serious, of the antipathy of which we speak, and if the nineteenth century must see the end of the world, it would certainly be he who must be called the Anti-christ.

As near as may be, M. Feuerbach has defined Christianity as a perversion of human nature, and the Christian æsthetic as a perversion of the most secret instincts of the human heart. The incessant lamentations of Christians, à propos of their sins, appeared to him intolerable simpering; the humility and poverty of monastic life are only to him the worship of dirt and ugliness, and he would heartily say with Rutilius Numatianus: "Tell me, then, is this sect less fatal than the prison of Circé? Circé changed bodies, now it is spirits that are changed into swine."

<sup>1</sup>The most important writings of M. Feuerbach and the neo-Hegelian school have been collected and translated by M. Herman Ewerbeck, in two volumes, entitled, the one: *What is Religion?* the other: *What is the Bible according to the new German Philosophy?* (Paris, 1850.) It is a pity that the translator, whose disinterestedness merits praise, has mixed writings it might be well to know with fragments of no value, and some of which can in no sense be taken seriously.

Let us here say boldly, and with the more assurance since we desire here to oppose only considerations of art to the views of the same order, that the critical spirit cannot admit so absolute a judgment. Wherever there is originality, a true expansion of any instincts of human nature, one must recognise and adore the beautiful. Let this æsthetic feeling be as sad as you please, it nevertheless possesses boldness and grandeur. Though dull and uncouth as compared with the learned fables of Greece, this legend, independently of its incomparable morality, possesses, even when regarded only from the point of view of art, as great natural simplicity. Good taste refused the name of beauty to everything that did not attain to perfection of form. Such is not our *criterium*: we excuse barbarism wherever we find the expression of a new mode of feeling and the true breath of the human soul.

Would to God that M. Feuerbach had bathed in richer fountains of life than those of his exclusive and supercilious Germanism! Ah! if seated upon the ruins of Mount Palatin or of Mount Cœlius, he had heard the stroke of the everlasting bells linger and die upon the deserted hills where Rome stood formerly; or if from the solitary seashore of the Lido he had listened to the carillon of Saint Mark dying away on the surface of the lagoons; if he had seen Assisi and its wonderful mysteries, its double basilica and the grand legend of the middle ages of the second Christ traced by the pencil of Ciambue and Giotto; if he had felt himself grow weary with the long, sweet regards of the Virgins of Perugia, or at San Dominico of Siena had seen Saint Catherine in ecstasy! no, M. Feuerbach would not thus cast opprobrium upon the poetry of one half of humanity, and would not exclaim as if he were exorcising the shade of Iscariot!

The error of M. Feuerbach lies almost always in



his æsthetic judgments. Facts are often presented by him with sufficient skill: but they are always apprised with revolting severity and with the determination to find everything Christian ugly, atrocious or ridiculous. One can agree with him in many points of detail without sharing any of his views in regard to the general morality of history. Yes, the great difference between Hellenism and Christianity is that Hellenism is natural, and Christianity supernatural. The religions of antiquity were nothing but the State, the family, art and morals raised to an exalted and poetic expression; they were not cognisant of renunciation and sacrifice; they did not divide life; the distinction of sacred and profane had no existence for them. Antiquity in its modes of feeling is direct and simple; Christianity, on the contrary, always on its guard against nature, seeks out the strange and the paradoxical. It prefers abstinence to enjoyment, while good ought to be sought for in its opposite. The wisdom of the flesh (that is to say, natural wisdom) is foolishness, the foolishness of the Cross is wisdom. Are the writings of St Paul from one end to the other aught else than the deliberate reversal of human meanings, an anticipatory commentary on the *Credo quia absurdum* of Tertullian? The distinction between the flesh and the spirit, unknown to the ancients, for whom human life preserved its harmonious unity, kindled henceforward a war, which eighteen centuries have not been able to extinguish, between man and himself.

Hence we see strange overturnings compensated by grand moral conquests. The errors which were known to antiquity only by the cults the most deeply steeped in superstition, became contagious. Upon what does the meditation of Christian piety exercise itself by preference? the imagination of the ecstatic? Is it upon the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, upon those

dialectical dogmas which are received as sealed formulas? No. It is upon the little infant, the *Santo Bambino* in his manger. He is not accounted holy who has not kissed his feet; Saint Catherine of Siena espoused him, and others like her have folded him in their arms. It is upon the Passion, upon the suffering Christ. He is no saint who has not felt the print in his pierced hands and in his open side; Saint Madeleine of Pazzi saw him in her dreams shedding out five fountains of blood from his five wounds; others have seen his heart pierced and bleeding. It is upon Mary; Mary has sufficed to satisfy the requirements of the love of ten centuries of ascetics. Mary has entered by full title into the Trinity; she greatly excels that third forgotten person, the Holy Ghost, without either lovers or adorers. She completes the divine family; for it would have been marvellous if the feminine element, in its triumph, had not succeeded in mounting up to the very bosom of God, and, between Father and Son, there had not been enthroned the Mother!<sup>1</sup>

In like manner the ideal of morality changes, but, in a sense, becomes elevated and ennobled. Paganism, taking human nature as just and good, consecrated the whole of it, even its baser parts; this was the mistake, the error. Christianity, on the other hand, by placing nature too absolutely under the ban, fostered that taste for the abject and the ugly which led away the Middle Ages. The man of antiquity, Aristides or Solon, floats tranquilly in the current of life; his perfections and imperfections are those of our nature. The Christian man mounts the column of the Stylite, withdraws from everything, and, using only so much of the surface of this earth

<sup>1</sup> The representations of the *Incoronata*, in which Mary, placed between Father and Son, receives the crown from the hands of the former, and the homage of the latter, describe the true Trinity of Christian piety.

as that which he must rest his feet upon, places himself between heaven and earth. The ideal of the beautiful degenerates in pureness, but gains in depth. The ideal is no longer nature ennobled, the perfection of the real, the flower of that which is; the ideal is the anti-natural, it is the corpse of a dead God, it is the pallid and veiled *Addolorata*, it is Madeleine torturing her body. If one had proposed to the artist of antiquity one of the subjects which Christianity delights in—the Virgin, the Crucifix—he would have spurned it from him as being out of the question. The *Ceres dolorosa* is beautiful as a woman and as a mother, but the Virgin! . . . her conception, her delivery are supernatural: her brothers are angels; here below she has neither sister nor spouse. So, when Christian art, returning to profane tradition, goes to seek the types of the Madonna at Albano or Transtevera, it will be a sacrilege against which the Christian conscience will justly cry out. Prometheus chained to his rock is still beautiful. But Jesus upon the Cross! If you seek to realise in that attenuated form the ideal of human forms, the harmonious proportions of the Dionysius or the Apollo, if you give to that thorn-crowned head the high placidity of the Olympian Jupiter, it is an absurdity and almost an impiety. The Byzantine Church was logical in obstinately maintaining the thesis of *the* Christ's physical repulsiveness. This must be represented as spare, attenuated and bleeding: let them count all his bones, let them take him for a leper, a worm of the earth, and no man. *Putavimus eum quasi leprosum. . . . Non est species ei neque decor. Despectum novissimum virorum, virum dolorum et scientem infirmitatem.*<sup>1</sup>

In good truth all this is strange, new, unheard of,

<sup>1</sup> We have regarded him as a leper. . . . He hath no form nor comeliness. . . . Despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

and Saint Paul had good reason to call it scandal and folly. But all this belongs to human nature; it all came in its season; all this issued at its time from the eternal seed which contains beautiful things. A great modification was taking place in human nature: a tepid, humid wind blew from the south and relaxed its hardness. Love changed its object; to the enthusiasm for the beautiful succeeded enthusiasm for suffering, the apotheosis of the Man of Sorrow, acquainted with grief, the "Divine Leper," as Bossuet<sup>1</sup> called him.

It is through a grave misunderstanding that the reproach of materialism has been ascribed to antiquity. Antiquity is neither materialistic nor spiritualistic, it is human. Life in antiquity, so serene, so graceful in its fair proportions, did not open out into the infinite. Look at these charming little houses of Pompeii; how gay they are, how finished, but how narrow and pent up! Everywhere repose and joy, everywhere pictures of happiness and of pleasure. But that no longer suffices us: we can longer conceive life without sadness. Penetrated as we are with our supernaturalistic ideas, and our thirst for the infinite, this art so limited, this morality so simple, this plan of life so bounded in all its parts, seem to us a narrow realism. Castor and Pollux, Diana and Minerva are to us cold images, because they represent nature in its healthy and normal state. Yet we must be on our guard; these grand airs of abstention and of sacrifice are often only a refinement of instincts which feed on their opposite qualities. Christian spiritualism is, at bottom, much more sensual than what is called the materialism of antiquity, and sometimes resembles weakness. The Dorian Artemis, that masculine

<sup>1</sup> This side of Christianity has never been grasped with more energy and originality than by Bossuet in the admirable sermons, "On the Passion," and "On the Compassion of the Holy Virgin."

young woman who touched the severe Hippolytus, has always seemed to me more austere than the "dear Saint Elizabeth" with whom M. de Montalembert became so terribly enamoured.<sup>1</sup> Those who have visited Naples may have seen in the chapel Della Pietà de Sangri, a *Pudicizia* covered with a long veil, which clings to her whole person in a manner to suggest beneath the marble folds, the form rendered more seductive by mystery. On the other hand, in the Museum of the Vatican, there is an antique Modesty, half nude, but veiled by its severe beauty. . . . Which, think you, is really the more chaste? Greece, with its exquisite tact, has perceived in everything the golden mien, the fleeting shadows, a line which is seized at moments, but which one cannot retain. Moderation, indeed, appears, in time, cold and monotonous; one grows tired of just proportion and good taste; the perfectly pure types no longer suffice: one wishes for the strange, the superhuman and the supernatural.

It is not the fault of individuals or of systems that religious sentiments are subjected to those profound revolutions. It is not willingly that man quits the gentle and easy parts of the plain for the sharp and romantic peaks of the mountain. That happens because symmetry and proportion, which represent only the finite, have become insufficient for the heart which aspires to the infinite. As long as humanity confines itself within just and narrow limits, it is at rest, and happy in its mediocrity; but, when it lends the ear to the vastest requirements, it becomes exiguous and unhappy, though, in one sense, more noble; it will, in art and in morals, prefer suffering, the unsatisfied

<sup>1</sup> Let it be understood that I am speaking only of the lofty and pure antiquity of Greece. I must observe, too, that the present question is, first of all, one of æsthetics and of taste, and must be settled by an examination of works of art and of poetry.



desire, the vague and painful feelings which have their birth in the infinite, to the full and complete satisfaction which a finished work procures.

But if there be one incurable evil, it is, thank God, this. The delicate are the unfortunate, but one cannot cure delicateness. We can perceive that we have bent the mind away, but we cannot straighten it again. And then aberration has so many charms, and correctness is so tedious! An ancient temple possesses incontestably a purer beauty than a Gothic church, and yet we spend hours in the latter without fatigue, while we cannot, without being tired, remain five minutes in the former. That proves, according to M. Feuerbach, that we are perverted; but what is to be done about it? If M. Feuerbach had limited himself to pointing out these contrasts with serenity and affectionately; if, content with observing curiously the alterations of human sentiments, if he had not met the often gratuitous enthusiasm of the believer with a hate more gratuitous still, we should not have had the right to treat him with so much severity. But the impartial philosopher cannot subscribe to the absolute condemnation that M. Feuerbach hurls against eighteen centuries of history of the human mind; for, let us reflect, it is the human mind itself that is in question. It serves no purpose for him to turn his hatred against the words Christianity, Theology, etc. What then has created Christianity? What has created Theology? Humanity accepts no other chains than those which she herself imposes. Humanity has created all, and, we are fain to believe, done everything well.

Moreover, it is not supernaturalism alone which falls under the lash of the criticism of the new German school. M. Feuerbach and all the philosophers of that school declare unhesitatingly that theism, natural religion—all systems, in a word, which admit anything transcendental, ought to be put on the same foot-



ing as supernaturalism. Belief in God and in the immortality of the soul is, in his eyes, wholly as superstitious as to believe in the Trinity and in miracles. Criticism of the skies is, according to him, only criticism of the earth. Theology ought to become anthropology. All thoughts of a superior world, all regard cast by man beyond himself and the actual, all religious sentiment under whatever form it manifests itself, is but an illusion. But not to be severe towards such a philosophy, we will only look upon it as a misapprehension. M. Feuerbach has written at the head of the second edition of his *Essence of Christianity*: *By this book I have undone myself with God and with the world.* We fear that for this he is a little at fault himself, and that, if he had so wished, God and the world would have forgiven him. Carried away by that evil tone which reigns in the German universities, and which I unhesitatingly call the *pedantry of audacity*, many upright minds and honest souls claim, without meriting, the honours of Atheism. When a German vaunts his impiety, we must never take him at his word. Germany is not capable of being irreligious; religion, that is to say, the aspiration after an ideal world, is the *very* foundation of its nature. When it would be Atheistic, it is so devotedly, and with a sort of unction. But if you practise the cult of the beautiful and the true, if the sanctity of the moral speaks to your heart: if everything beautiful and everything true leads you back to the hearth of holy life: then, when arrived there, you forbear speech, you envelop your head, you purposely confound thought and language in order to say nothing partial in the presence of the infinite, how dare you speak of Atheism? But if your faculties, vibrating in unison, have never responded to that grand peculiar One whom we call God, I have nothing more to say; you are lacking in the essential and characteristic element of our nature.

To those who, planting themselves on substance, ask me "This God, is He, or is He not?" "Ah!" I reply, "God! It is He that is, and all else only seems to be." Let it be supposed, however, that to suit our philosophy some other phrase would be preferred, seeing that abstract terms do not express with sufficient clearness real existence, it would be a terrible inconvenience for us to cut off thus all the poetic sources of the past, and to separate ourselves by our speech from the simple, who adore so well in their way. The word God, possessing as it does the respect of humanity, that word long sanctioned by it, and having been employed in the finest poems; to abandon it, I say, would be to reverse all the usages of language. Tell the simple to live a life of aspiration; to seek after the true, the beautiful, and the moral, the words would have for them no meaning. Tell them to love God, not to offend God, they will understand you at once. God, Providence, Immortality — good old words, a little clumsy, perhaps, which philosophy may interpret in a sense more and more refined, but which it will never replace with advantage. Under one form or another God will always be the embodiment of our supernatural wants, the *category of the ideal* (that is to say, the form under which we conceive the ideal), exactly as space and time are the *categories of the body* (that is to say, the forms under which we conceive bodies). In other words, man, placed in presence of things beautiful, good or true, goes out of himself, and, caught up by a celestial charm, annihilates his pitiful personality, and becomes exalted, absorbed. What is this if it be not adoration?

## SPINOZA.

YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—  
Two hundred years ago to-day (21st February 1877), at about this hour in the afternoon, there expired, at the age of forty-three, on the quiet quay of the Pavilioengragt, only a few steps from here, a poor man whose life had been so profoundly silent that his last sigh was scarcely heard. He occupied an out-of-the-way room in the house of a worthy couple, who, without understanding him, entertained for him a sincere regard. On the morning of the day on which he died, he descended from his room to salute, as usual, his hosts. It was a day on which religious services had been held, and the kindly philosopher conversed with the good people touching what the minister had said, approved of the advice given by the latter, and counselled them to comply with it. The host and hostess (let us name them gentlemen, for their honest sincerity entitles them to a place in this beautiful idyl of La Hague, related by Colerus), the Van der Spycks, husband and wife, went back to church to their devotions. When they returned home, their quiet lodger was dead. The funeral took place on the 25th February, and a service was held in the new church on the Spuy, as though he had been one of the faithful of Christ. All the people of the neighbourhood regretted much the disappearance of the sage who had lived amongst them as one of themselves. His hosts cherished his memory with a religious regard, and those who

had approached him never would speak of him afterwards without calling him "the blessed Spinoza."

Anyone who could, about that time, discern the current of opinion which was being formed in the make-believe enlightened Pharisæism circles of that day, would, in singular contrast, have witnessed that philosopher, so beloved of the simple-minded and of such as were of a pure heart, become the bugbear of the narrow orthodoxy which affected to be the possessor of the truth. A villain, a scourge, an imp of hell, the most wicked atheist that ever had lived, a man steeped in crime—such, in the opinion of theologians and deep-thinking philosophers, was what the recluse of the Pavilioengragt had come to be. Portraits of him were scattered abroad, in which he was represented as "bearing upon his face the signs of reprobation." A great philosopher, as bold as he, but not so consistent and so completely sincere, called him a "wretch." But justice veered round in turn. The human mind, about the end of the eighteenth century, attaining, especially in Germany, to a more enlightened theology and a broader philosophy, recognised in Spinoza the precursor of a new Gospel. Jacobi let the public into his confidence in regard to a conversation he had with Spinoza. He had gone to Lessing's house in the hope that Lessing would come to his assistance against Spinoza. You may guess his astonishment when he discovered that Lessing was an avowed Spinozist! "Εν χαί πᾶν," said the latter to him; here is the whole of philosophy. He, who had been denounced for a whole century as an atheist, Novalis found to be "inebriated of God." His books, now long forgotten, were published, and eagerly sought after. Scheiermacher, Goethe, Hegel, Schelling, proclaimed Spinoza with one voice to be the father of modern thought. There may have been some exaggeration in this first outburst of tardy reparation, but time,

which puts everything in its proper place, has confirmed throughout the verdict of Lessing; and there is no enlightened person to-day who does not recognise that Spinoza penetrated the divine conscience to a greater extent than any of his contemporaries. Gentlemen, it is this belief that has made you anxious that this humble and holy tomb should have its anniversary. It is the common affirmation of an unhampered faith in the infinite, which, on this day, has succeeded in bringing together, on this spot which has been the witness of so much virtue, the most select gathering that a man of genius could group around him after his death. A sovereign, as distinguished by gifts of intellect as by those of the soul, is present in spirit amongst us. A prince, who can justly apprise every kind of merit, has, in adding *éclat* to this solemnity by his presence, deigned to bear witness that he is no stranger to any of the glories of Holland, and that there is no thought so elevated as to escape his enlightened judgment or his philosophic admiration.

## I.

The illustrious Baruch de Spinoza was born at Amsterdam at the very time when your republic had attained the zenith of its glory and its power. He belonged to that great race which, by the influence it has exercised, and by the services which it has rendered, occupies so exceptional a place in the history of civilisation. The development of the Jewish people, in its way a sort of miracle, takes place side by side with that other miracle, the development of the Greek mind; for if Greece was the first to realise the ideal of poetry, science, philosophy, art, and the profane life, if I may thus express myself, it was, in like manner, the



Jewish people which has given the human species its religion. The Jewish prophets inaugurated in the world the idea of justice, the vindication of the rights of the weak—a vindication so much the more hard, because, all ideas of future rewards being strange to them, they dreamed of the realisation of this ideal upon this earth and in a near future. Isaiah, a Jew, seven hundred and fifty years before Jesus Christ, made bold to say that sacrifices were of little consequence, and that the one thing which availed was clean hands and purity of heart. Next, when events in the world seem to counteract in an irremediable manner these glittering Utopias, Israel makes an unparalleled *volte-face*, relegating to the domain of pure idealism that Kingdom of God which did not comport with this world. A moiety of his sons founded Christianity; another, continues, through the funeral piles of the Middle Ages, that imperturbable protest, "Hear, O Israel; Jehovah, thy God, is *unique*; holy is his name." This powerful tradition of idealism and of hoping against all hope, this religion which demanded of its adherents the most heroic sacrifices without (and which was of its very essence) promising anything certain in return beyond this life, was the healthy and bracing atmosphere in which Spinoza was reared. His education, at the commencement, was exclusively Hebraic; the literature of Israel was at first, and, to speak, truly, his perpetual mistress, the meditation of his whole life.

As usually happens, Hebrew literature became, on taking the character of a sacred book, the subject of a conventional exegesis, the object of which, in truth, was less to explain old texts according to the meaning of their authors than to find in them nourishment for the moral and religious wants of the times. The keen mind of young Spinoza soon discovered the defects of the exegesis of the synagogue. The Bible, as it was taught to him, was



disfigured by more than two thousand years of accumulated misrepresentations. He was eager to cut into these. At bottom he was at one with the true fathers of Judaism, especially with that great Maimonide, who had been instrumental in introducing into Judaism the boldest philosophy. Spinoza, with marvellous sagacity, divined the great results of the critical exegesis which, one hundred and twenty-five years later, was to give the finest works of Hebrew genius a true interpretation. Was that to destroy the Bible? Has this admirable literature lost anything by being presented in its true colours, instead of being placed outside the laws common to humanity. Certainly not. Truths revealed by science always eclipse the dreams which science has destroyed. The world of Laplace, I imagine, surpasses in beauty that of a *Cosmos Indicopleustes*, which represents the universe as a box, on the lid of which the stars defile in grooves, a few leagues from us. The Bible, similarly, is more beautiful when we are able to see there echeloned on a canvas a thousand years old, every aspiration, every sigh, every prayer, which the most fervid religious conscience has ever breathed, than when we are obliged to look upon it as a book such as never was known or written out, preserved, and interpreted in defiance of all the ordinary rules of the human mind.

But the mediæval persecutions of Judaism had produced their usual effect in such cases: they had rendered people's minds narrow and suspicious. A few years before, at Amsterdam, the unfortunate Uriel Acosta had cruelly expiated his doubts, which fanaticism regarded as culpable as avowed infidelity. The boldness of young Spinoza was even more badly received: he was anathematized, and he was subjected to an excommunication which he did not deserve. This latter, gentlemen, is a very old story. Religious

communities, beneficent cradles of so much that is serious and virtuous, cannot permit of anything which is not exclusively embraced within their own bounds: they claim the right to imprison for ever the life which they have in the beginning taken under their wing; they treat as apostacy the legitimate emancipation of the spirit which seeks to soar by itself. It calls to mind the story of the egg accusing the bird which has escaped from it of ingratitude. The egg is necessary up to a certain point. Then it becomes an obstacle: it must be broken. It is indeed marvellous that Erasmus of Rotterdam should have found himself cramped in his cell; that Luther did not prefer his monastic vows to the vows much more holy that all men have contracted, by the very fact of his being, towards the truth! This is a case where, had Erasmus persisted in his monastic routine, or Luther continued to distribute patents of indulgence, they would have deserved to be called apostates. Spinoza was the greatest of modern Jews, and Judaism exiled him. Nothing could be more simple: it had to be; it always will be. Finite symbols, prisons of infinite spirit, protest eternally against the efforts of idealism to enlarge them. The spirit, on its part, struggles eternally to have more air and light. It is eighteen hundred and fifty years ago since Judaism denounced as a traitor him who would have made an unexampled fortune for the maxims of the synagogue. And how many times has not the Christian Church expelled from its bosom those who would have done her the most honour? In such cases, gentlemen, we have done our duty when we preserve a pious memory for the education we have received in our infancy. Let the old Churches accuse as much as they please him who has quitted them: they will not succeed in extorting from us any other sentiment than that of gratitude; for, after all, the harm they can do us is as nothing compared to the good they do us.

## II.

Behold, then, the excommunicated of the synagogue of Amsterdam compelled to erect for himself a spiritual abode outside the house which would no more of him! He had the greatest sympathy with Christianity; but he dreaded all chains; he did not embrace it. Descartes had just refreshed philosophy by his firm and sober rationalism. Descartes was his master; he took up problems at the point where that great genius had left them, he perceived that his theology, through fear of the Sorbonne, had always been somewhat parched. Oldenburg, asking him one day what fault he had to find with the philosophy of Descartes and Bacon, Spinoza answered that the principal fault he had to find was that they had not sufficiently considered the First Cause. Perhaps his reminiscences of Jewish theology—that ancient wisdom of the Jews before which he frequently bowed—suggested to him in respect thereof loftier views and more ambitious aspirations. The ideas, not only of the commonalty, but even of those of thinking men on the divinity, appeared to him as insufficient. He perceived clearly that we could not set bounds to the infinite, that divinity was either everything or nothing, that if the divine was anything, it must be all-pervading. For twenty years he meditated upon these problems without ever drawing away his thoughts from them for a moment. Our dislike for abstract formulas and systems does not permit us to-day to accept in an absolute manner propositions which are believed to embrace the secrets of the infinite. To Spinoza, as to Descartes, the universe was only extension and thought: chemistry and physiology were lacking to that great school, too exclusively confined to geometry and mechanics. A stranger to the ideas of life and to the notions of the

constitution of the body which chemistry has revealed, too much attached yet to the scholastic expressions *substance* and *attribute*, Spinoza had not attained to that living and fruitful life which natural science and history has shown us presiding in boundless space over a development growing more and more intense; still, apart from a certain boldness in the expression, what a grandeur there is in that inflexible geometrical deduction resulting in the super-eminent conclusion—"It is of the nature of substance to develop itself necessarily through an infinity of infinite attributes, infinitely modified!" God is thus absolute thought, the universal consciousness itself. The ideal exists, nay, it *is* existence; all else is but vain appearance. Bodies and souls are pure modes, whose substance is God; it is only the modes which fall into decay; substance reaches into eternity. According to this, God is not proved; his existence results solely from his idea: everything involves and presupposes him. God is the condition of all existence, of all thought. If God did not exist, thought could conceive more than nature could supply, which is a contradiction.

Spinoza did not clearly perceive universal progress. The world, as he conceived it, seems in some sort crystallized in matter, which is indestructible extension in a soul, which, again, is immutable thought. The sentiment of God extinguishes in him the sentiment of man. When confronted with the infinite, he could not sufficiently discern what was concealed of the divine in its relative manifestations; but he saw clearer than anyone the eternal identity which served as the basis of all transitory evolutions. Everything which was limited seemed to him frivolous and unworthy the attention of a philosopher. With a bound he attained the lofty snow-clad summits, without once regarding the richly blooming life which the mountain sides gave forth. From this eminence, where other lungs than his must pant, he

surveys, he enjoys. There he breathes as freely as do the generality of men in the milder temperate regions. What he required was the eager, strong, and bracing air of the glacier. He did not ask any one to follow him there. He was like Moses, to whom was revealed on the mountain secrets unknown to the people. But I would have you believe, gentlemen, he was the seer of his age; he was in his time the one who discerned God most clearly.

### III.

It is easy to believe that, isolated on those snowy peaks, his mind must have been falsified in regard to human affairs—an optimist, a supercilious sceptic. Nothing of the kind, gentlemen. He was constantly engaged in applying his principles to human societies. The pessimism of Hobbes and the dreams of Thomas More were equally repugnant to him. One-half at least of the *Theologico-Politico Treatise*, published in 1670, might be reprinted to-day without losing any of its pertinence. Listen to this admirable title—*Tractatus Theologico-politicus, contienens dissertationes aliquot quibus ostenditur libertatim philosophandi non tantum salva pietatæ republicæ pace posse concedi sed eandem nisi cum passe republicæ ipsaque pietate coli non posse.* For centuries it was imagined that society rested on metaphysical dogmas. Spinoza clearly saw that the dogmas claimed to be necessary for humanity could not escape discussion; that revelation itself, if there be one, which, in order to reach us, traverses the faculties of the human mind, could no more than anything else escape criticism. I should like to quote to you in its entirety that twentieth chapter in which our great publicist establishes, with magisterial authority, this dogma, new then, and contested still, which is called liberty.



of conscience. "The ultimate design of the State," he said, "is not to dominate men, to restrain them by fear, to make them subject to the will of others, but, on the contrary, to permit everyone as far as is possible to live in security. That is to say, to preserve intact the natural right which is his, to live without being harmed himself or doing harm to others. No, I say, the design of the State is not to transform men into animals or automata from reasonable beings; its design is so to arrange matters that the citizens may develop their bodies and minds in security; and to make free use of their reason. The true design of the State, then, is liberty. . . . Whoever would respect the rights of the sovereign ought never to act in opposition to his decrees; but each has a right to think as he pleases and to say what he thinks, provided that he limits himself to speaking and to teaching in the name of pure reason, and that he does not attempt, in his private capacity, to introduce innovations into the State. For example, a citizen demonstrates that a certain law is repugnant to sound reason, and, believing this, he thinks it ought to be abrogated. If he submits his opinion to the judgment of the sovereign, to which alone it belongs to establish and to abolish laws, and if, in the meantime, he does nothing contrary to law, he certainly deserves well of the State as being a good citizen. . . .

"Let us admit that it is possible to stifle the liberty of men and to impose on them a yoke, to the point that they dare not even murmur, however feebly, without the consent of the sovereign, never, it is certain, can anyone hinder them from thinking according to their own free will. What follows hence? It is that men will think one way and speak another; that, consequently, good faith, so essential a virtue to a State, becomes corrupted; that adulation, so detestable, and perfidy shall be held in honour, bringing in their train a decadence of all

good and sound habitudes. . . . What can be more fatal to a State than to exile, as malcontents, honest citizens, simply because they do not hold the opinions of the multitude, and because they are ignorant of the art of dissembling! What can be more fatal to a State than to treat as enemies and to put to death men who have committed no other crime than that of thinking independently! Behold, then, the scaffold, the dread of the bad man, which now becomes the glorious theatre where tolerance and virtue blaze forth in all their splendour, and covers publicly with opprobrium the sovereign majesty! Assuredly there is but one thing which that spectacle can teach us, and that is to imitate these noble martyrs, or, if we fear death, to become the abject flatterers of the powerful. Nothing hence can be so perilous as to relegate and submit to divine right things which are purely speculative, and to impose laws upon opinions which are, or at least ought to be, subject to discussion among men. If the right of the State were limited to repressing acts, and speech were allowed impunity, controversies would not turn so often into seditions."

Wiser than so many men who claim to be practical, our speculator sees clearly that the only governments that are durable are reasonable governments, and that the only reasonable governments are tolerant governments. Far from absorbing the individual in the State, he creates for the latter solid guarantees against the omnipotence of the State. He is not a revolutionist; he is a moderate; he transforms; he explains, but he does not destroy. His God is not one of those who are pleased with ceremonies, sacrifices, the odour of incense, and yet Spinoza intends in no way to ruin religion; he has for Christianity a profound veneration, a tender and sincere respect. The supernatural has no meaning in his doctrine; according to his principles, anything

beyond nature is beyond being, and, consequently, is inconceivable; the *révélateurs*, the prophets, were men like any others. "It is not to think," he said; "it is to dream, to believe that prophets had human bodies, and had not human souls, and, consequently, that their science and their sensations were of a different nature from ours. Prophecy was not the appanage of one people only, the Jewish people. The distinction of Son of God was not the privilege of one man alone. . . . In order to exhibit clearly my idea, I say, it is not absolutely necessary for salvation to know the Christ according to the flesh; but it is quite otherwise, if one speaks of the Son of God; that is to say, of that eternal wisdom of God which is manifested in everything, and principally in the human soul, and still more than anywhere else in Jesus Christ. Without this wisdom no one can attain to the beatific state, since it alone teaches us what is true or false, good or evil. As for that which certain Churches enjoin . . . I have expressly given notice that I do not know what they mean, and, to speak plainly, I must avow that they seem to me to hold the same language as one who would pretend that a circle has put on the nature of a square." As for Schleiermacher; did he speak differently? and Spinoza, who, with Richard Simon, was the founder of the Biblical exegesis of the Old Testament, was he not, in like manner, the precursor of the liberal theologians, who, in our days, have demonstrated that Christianity is able to preserve all its *éclat* without the supernatural? His letters to Oldenburg on the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and in regard to the manner in which Saint Paul understood it, one hundred and fifty years later, would have passed for the manifesto of a whole school of critical theology.

In Spinoza's eyes, it matters little whether the *mystères* are understood in this or that manner,

provided that they are accepted in a pious sense ; religion has but one aim, piety ; what one must ask of it is not metaphysics, it is practical directions. At bottom, there is but one thing in the Scriptures, as there is in all revelation, "Love your neighbour." The fruit of religion is beatitude ; each one participates in it in a manner proportioned to his capacity and to his efforts. The souls which reason governs, philosophic souls, which even in this world live in God, are secure against death ; what death takes away from them is of no value ; but feeble or passionate souls must perish almost entirely, and death, instead of being for them a simple accident, reaches to the very foundation of their being. The ignorant man, who permits himself to be guided, to be blinded by passion, is agitated in a thousand divers senses by exterior causes, and never enjoys true peace of soul ; for him to cease to suffer is to cease to exist. Contrariwise, the soul of the wise man can scarcely be troubled. Possessing, by a sort of eternal necessity, the consciousness of himself, and of God and of things, he never ceases to be, while he always preserves true peace of mind.

Spinoza could not support the idea that his tentative should be considered as irreligious or subversive. The timid Oldenburg could not conceal from him that some of his opinions appeared to certain readers as tending to the subversion of piety. "Everything which accords with reason," responded Spinoza, "I perfectly believe is useful to the practice of virtue." The pretended superiority of grossly positive conceptions on the question of religion and a future life found him intractable. "Is it rejecting all religion I ask," said he, "to acknowledge God as the supreme good, and to think, because of this title, that we must love him with a free soul ? To maintain that all our happiness, that the highest liberty consists in this love, that the prize of virtue is virtue itself, and



that a blind and impotent soul finds its punishment in its blindness—is that forswearing religion?" Behind such attacks he perceived sentiment of the basest description. According to him, he who feels irritated against disinterested religion showed that reason and virtue had no attraction for him, and that, if he were not restrained by fear, he would take pleasure in following the dictates of his passions. "Thus, then," he adds, "it is only the abstention from evil and the obeying of the divine commands that such a one, just as a slave would, regrets, and as a reward for this slavery he expects of God recompenses which are infinitely more valuable in his eyes than the divine love. The more aversion he feels, and the farther he is removed from the good, the more he hopes to be recompensed; and he figures to himself that those who are not restrained by the same fear just do exactly as he would: that is to say, live outside the law!" Spinoza concluded that this method of gaining heaven, by doing that which was requisite to merit hell, was opposed to reason, and that there was something absurd in pretending to please God by confessing to him that if one were not afraid of him one should not love him.

#### IV.

He perceived the danger of interfering with beliefs in which people approve of these subtle distinctions. *Caute* was a favourite maxim of his. Being made aware by his friends that the production of his *Ethics* would cause a great outcry, he did not permit it to be published during his lifetime. He was destitute of literary vanity, and never courted celebrity—for the very sufficient reason, indeed, that he was no doubt sure these would come to him unsought for. He was perfectly happy: he said so, and we can take



his word. Nay, he did more than this: he has left us his secret. Listen, gentlemen, listen to the receipt of this "prince of atheists" in order to find happiness. It is the love of God. To love God is to live in God. Life in God is the best and the most perfect, because it is the most reasonable, the most happy, the most abundant; in a word, because it gives a fuller existence than any other life, and satisfies more completely the innate desire which constitutes our very essence.

His everyday life was governed entirely by these maxims. That life was a model of good sense and judgment. It was regulated with that skill peculiar to the wise man, who only wishes for one thing, and always succeeds in obtaining it. No politician ever adapted his means so well in order to reach an end. Less circumspect, he might have incurred the fate of the unfortunate Acosta. Seeing that he loved truth for its own sake, he was indifferent to the injuries which the speaking of it might bring upon him. He never answered any attacks of which he was the object. He never attacked anybody. "It is contrary to my habits," he used to say, "to seek out the errors into which others have fallen." If he had had the desire to become an office-holder, his life no doubt would have been embittered by persecutions and misfortunes. He was nothing, and wished to be nothing. *Ama nesciri* was his motto, just as it was that of the author of the *Imitation*. He sacrificed everything to peace of mind, and in this he was not selfish, for his meditations are important to us all. More than once he declined the wealth which came to him, accepting only what his needs required. The King of France offered him a pension: he thanked him for his offer. The Elector Palatine offered him a chair at Heidelberg, "You shall have perfect liberty," he was told, "for the Prince is satisfied that you would not abuse this privilege by disturbing the established religion." "I do not quite understand,"

he replied, "what are the limits it would be necessary to set upon the liberty of philosophising which you are so kind to offer me under the one condition of not disturbing the established religion; and, again, seeing that I should have to give instruction to youth, it would hinder me from advancing myself in philosophy. I have succeeded in procuring a tranquil life, but only on the condition of renouncing all kinds of public instruction." He felt that his duty was to think. He was indeed thinking for humanity, the ideas of which he anticipated by more than a hundred years.

He carried this same instinctive ability into all the relations of life. He felt that public opinion never allowed a man to make two bold attempts at one time; and then, being a freethinker, he considered himself bound to live the life of a saint. But what am I saying? Was not this gentle and pure life the direct expression of his peaceable and amiable conscience? In those days the atheist was represented as a blackguard armed with daggers. Spinoza was throughout his life humble, gentle and pious. His adversaries had the naïveté to object to this. They would have had that he had lived up to the established type, and that, after leading the life of a devil incarnate, he should die in despair. Spinoza laughed at this singular demand, and refused, even to please his enemies, to change his mode of life.

He had excellent friends, was courageous when it was necessary to be so, and protested against popular uprisings when they appeared to him to be uncalled for. Repeated disillusionments did not prevent him from remaining faithful to the republican party; the liberalism of his opinions was never at the mercy of events. That which redounded to his honour more than anything, perhaps, was the esteem and sincere affection of the plain people amongst whom he lived. Gentlemen, the esteem

of the simple is beyond price; their judgment almost always is that of God. To the good Van Spycks he was evidently the ideal of a perfect lodger. "No one could give less trouble," they told Colerus, some years after his death. "When at home in his lodgings, he was no inconvenience to anyone; he spent the best part of his time quietly in his room. When he found himself fatigued by too close application to study, he would come downstairs and speak to those whom he found in the lodgings, about everything which could serve as the subject of ordinary conversation, even about trifles." Indeed, a more affable neighbour never lived. He used to converse often with his hostess, particularly during the time of her confinements, and with others of the lodgers when any affliction or malady had fallen upon them. He would advise the children to attend divine service, and, when returned thence, he would question them as to what they had heard. He almost always strongly backed up what the preacher had said. One of the persons he esteemed the most was Pastor Cordes, an excellent man who could explain the Scriptures well. He used sometimes to go and hear him, and engaged his host never to miss the preaching of so able a man. One day his hostess asked him whether she could be saved by the religion she professed. "Your religion is good," he answered; "you ought not to seek for another, nor doubt that you will be saved by it, provided that, in addition to your piety, you lead at the same time a quiet and peaceable life."

He was sober and economical to a degree. His daily wants were supplied by manual occupation that of polishing spectacle glasses, in which he became very skilled. The Van der Spycks handed over to Colerus some small scraps of paper on which he had jotted down his expenses; they amounted

on an average to about twopence-halfpenny a day. He made a careful adjustment of his accounts every quarter, so that his expenditure might be neither more nor less than his means. His dress was plain, almost shabby; but a quiet serenity pervaded his whole manner. It was clear that he had hit upon a method which afforded him perfect contentment.

He was never either depressed or gay, while the equableness of his temper was marvellous to behold. He perhaps felt a little sad the day on which the daughter of his professor, Van den Ende, preferred Kerkering to him, but I imagine he quickly consoled himself. "Reason is my enjoyment," he used to say; "and the goal to which I aspire in this life is joy and serenity." It was disagreeable to him to hear anyone commend sadness. "It is superstition," he said, "which sets up sadness as a good, and everything which produces joy as an evil. God would be an impious being (*envieux*) if he rejoiced in my weakness and in the pain which I suffer. In point of fact, in proportion as we experience a greater joy, so do we attain to a higher perfection, and partake more of the divine nature. . . . Joy, then, can never be an evil, so long as it is regulated by the law of our actual utility. The virtuous life is not a sad and gloomy life, a life of privations and austerities. How could the divinity take pleasure in the spectacle of my weakness, or impute to my credit the tears, sobs and terrors, all signs of a feeble soul? Yes," he added vigorously, "it is the part of a wise man to use the things of this life and to enjoy them as much as possible, to recruit our forces with a modicum of agreeable food, to charm our senses with the odour and delightful verdure of flowers, to adorn even our dress, to enjoy music, games, spectacles, and every manner of entertainment that

one may give oneself up to without doing injury to oneself." People talk incessantly of repentance, of humility, of death, but repentance is not a virtue, it is the consequence of weakness; no more is humility, inasmuch as it creates in man the idea of his inferiority. As to the thought of death, it is the daughter of fear, and it is in feeble souls that it elects to dwell." Again, of all things in the world a free man thinks the least about, is death. Wisdom is meditation, not on death, but on life.

## V.

Since the days of Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, we have never witnessed a life so profoundly penetrated by the sentiment of the divine. In the twelfth, thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, rationalistic philosophy boasted some very great men, but she had no saints. Amongst the greatest leaders of Italian free-thought, there was often something hard and repulsive blended in their characters. Religion had been altogether absent from those lives in revolt, not less against human than against divine laws, the last example of which was that of poor Vanini. In the present instance it is religion which produces freethought, it being a part of piety. Religion, in Spinoza's idea is not a part of life, it is life itself. What is of consequence is not to be in possession of some more or less correct metaphysical phrase; it is to give to life a fixed pole, a supreme direction, an ideal.

It was in this way, gentlemen, that your illustrious countryman raised a standard which is capable even at the present day of sheltering all who think and all who feel nobly. Yes; religion is eternal, it responds to the most imperious wants of the most primitive as well as most cultivated man; it will only perish with



humanity itself, or rather, its disappearance would be the proof that degenerated humanity was ready to return to the animality whence it sprung. And yet, no dogma, no worship, no formula is capable in our days of annihilating the religious sentiment. Here, two apparently contradictory assertions must be maintained in presence of one another. Evil to him who pretends that religion is a thing of the past! Evil to him who imagines that he can succeed in giving to old symbols the force which they had when they were sustained by the unassailable dogmatism of former days! We must have done with this dogmatism, we must set aside those fixed beliefs; sources not only of so much strife and heartburning, but also principles of such ardent convictions; we must renounce the belief that it is incumbent on us to maintain in others beliefs which we no longer share. Spinoza had just cause to have a terror of hypocrisy; hypocrisy is supple and dishonest, and, above all, hypocrisy is of no utility. But, in truth, who is deceived in this? The persistence of the higher classes in ostentatiously parading before the eyes of the uncultivated classes the religious forms of the past, can only have one effect, and that is to ruin their authority in days of crises, when it is important that the people should still believe in the judgment and virtue of some one.

All honour, then, to Spinoza, who dared to say, "Reason before everything!" Reason can never run counter to the true interests of humanity. But to those who are carried away by ill-considered discontent, let us recall to them that Spinoza never understood religious revolution but as a change of formulæ. In his view the essence remained, though called by another name. If, on the other hand, he energetically resisted the theocratic power of the clergy, conceived as distinct from civil society, and the tendency of the State to occupy itself with metaphysical subtleties, on

the other hand, he never repudiated either the State or Religion. He wished the State to be tolerant, and Religion to be free. We can desire nothing more than this. We ought not to impose beliefs on others which we do not ourselves entertain. When the believers of other days constituted themselves persecutors, they were in that tyrannical, but they were at least consistent; contrariwise, if we were to do as they did, it would be altogether absurd. Our religion is a sentiment susceptible of being dressed up in numerous forms. These forms are far from being of the same value; nevertheless, there is not one of them which possesses either strength or authority to expel the other's Liberty. This was the last word of the religious polity of Spinoza. Let it also be the last word of ours. It is the most honest course; nay, it is perhaps at the same time the most efficacious, and the most sure for the progress of civilisation.

It is no doubt true that humanity advances in the progress of civilisation with most unequal strides. The gruff and violent Esau grows impatient with the delays occasioned by the short steps of the flock of Jacob. Let us allow to everything its proper time. Let us on no account permit naïveté and ignorance to interfere with the free movements of mind; but neither let us be troubled at the slow development of more sluggish intellects. Liberty to be absurd, in the case of some, is the condition of liberty of judgment in the case of others. Services rendered to the human mind by violence are not services at all. There is nothing more simple than that those who cannot take truth seriously should practise constraint in order to obtain exterior submission. But with us who believe that truth is something real, and pre-eminently respectable, how can we dream of obtaining by force an adhesion which is only to be prized when it is the fruit of free conviction? We no longer admit sacramental formulas, operating through their own force,

independently of the judgment of him to whom they are applied. To us a belief has no value when it has not been achieved by the reflection of the individual; and not only that, but when it has been assimilated as well. Conviction effected by authority is as utterly nonsensical as love secured by force, or sympathy extorted by order. Gentlemen, let us tell ourselves not only that we always defend our liberty against those who would seek to deprive us of it, but also, if need be, to defend the liberty of those who have not always respected ours, and who, probably, if they became our masters, would not respect it again.

It is Holland, gentlemen, which, more than two hundred years ago, has had the glory of demonstrating the possibility of these theories, and of realising them. "Must it be proved," says Spinoza, "that this liberty of thought does not give rise to any serious inconveniences, and that it suffices to restrain men, openly divided in their opinions, from reciprocally respecting each other's rights? Instances abound, and we have not to go very far to seek for them. Let us cite the case of the city of Amsterdam, whose important growth, an object of admiration for other nations, is but the fruit of this liberty. In the bosom of that flourishing republic, that eminent city, men of all nations and of all sects live together in the most perfect concord . . . and there is no sect so odious, whose votaries, provided they do not trench upon the rights of others, do not find there public aid and protection, in presence of the magistrates." Descartes was of the same opinion when he came to seek, in your country, the tranquillity necessary for his meditations. Again, thanks to that noble privilege of a free country, which your forefathers gloriously succeeded in maintaining against all foes, your Holland became the asylum in which the human mind, sheltered from all the tyrannies spread over Europe, found air to breathe

a public to understand it, organs to multiply its voice, elsewhere gagged.

Great, assuredly, are the wounds of our century, and great are its perplexities. It is never safe to raise so many problems at one and the same time, before we possess the elements for resolving them. It was not we who shattered that crystal paradise, with its reflections of silver and azure, which has ravished and consoled the hearts of so many people. Nevertheless, it is in pieces; what is broken is broken, and no serious mind will ever undertake the childish task of bringing back the past ignorance which has been dispelled, or of restoring the vanished illusions. People in large towns have almost everywhere lost faith in the supernatural. Even if we sacrificed our own convictions and our sincerity, we could not induce them to return to it. But the personal supernatural, understood differently in other times, is not the ideal. The origin of the supernatural is lost. The cause of the ideal has suffered no reverse; it never will. The ideal is the soul of the world, the permanent God, the primordial, efficient and final cause of this universe. In this we have the basis of eternal religion. In order to worship God, we have no need, any more than Spinoza had, of miracles nor of intercessory prayers. As long as there is fibre in the human heart, which shall vibrate to the touches of that which is just and honest, so long will the soul, instinctively perfect, prefer virtue to life. So long as there are friends of truth ready to sacrifice their repose to science, trusty friends devoted to the useful and holy work of mercy, a heart of womanhood to love what is good, beautiful and pure, artists to make their tones and colours inspired accents,—gentlemen, God lives in us. It is only when selfishness, baseness of heart, narrowness of mind, indifference to science, contempt for the rights of man, forgetfulness of what is great and noble, shall pervade the world: I say, it is then that God shall no longer be in

humanity. But let us put such thoughts far away from us. Our aspirations, our sufferings, our faults, even, and our boldnesses are the proof that *the* God lives in us. Yes, human life still retains something of the divine. Our apparent negations are frequently nothing but the scruples of timorous minds which fear to overstep what they know. These are a more superior homage to the divinity than the hypocritical adoration of the formalist. God is still in us. Gentlemen, God is in us! *Est Deus in nobis.*

Let us all bow together, gentlemen, before the great and illustrious thinker, who, better than any one, two hundred years ago, proved by the example of his life and by the might (youthful even to-day) of his labours, that there are in such thoughts both spiritual joy and holy unction. Let us, with Schleiermacher, render the best homage of which we are capable to the manes of the holy and disowned Spinoza. "He was penetrated with the sublime spirit of the world; the Infinite was his beginning and his end; the Universal his single and eternal love. Living in saintly innocence and profound humility, he saw himself reflected in the eternal world, and he felt that the world was to him also a mirror worthy of love; his will was full of religion and full of the Holy Spirit. Alone and without equal, so he must appear to us a master in his art, but raised high above the worldly, without disciples and without the rights of citizenship anywhere.

This burgess right, gentlemen, we are about to confer on him. Your monument will be the link which unites his genius to the earth. His soul shall hover, like a good tutelary geni over this place where he accomplished his rapid journey among men. Woe be to him who in passing shall dare to injure that sweet and pensive figure! He would be punished, like as all vulgar hearts would, by his own vulgarity,



and by his incapacity to comprehend the divine. Here, from his pedestal of granite, he shall teach to everyone the path to happiness which he discovered, and, in ages to come, the cultivated man who passes along the Pavilioengragt shall say to himself—"It is here, perhaps, that God has been seen the most near."

Let the recollection of this ceremony be to everyone of us a consolation and a dear communion.

## THE TRIAL OF GALILEO.

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THE trial of Galileo was a decisive moment in the history of the human mind. It was at this moment that scholastic science (a silly compound of the Bible and Aristotle, misrepresenting both) found itself confronted with exact science, proving itself by itself. The old pedantry faced the ordeal boldly. It declared the system of the world, which has been proved to be the very truth, false and contrary to the faith. Religious interests, as usual, succeeded in complicating the question. Discarding sophisms, the following is as exact an account as may be of how things came to pass.

In 1616, Rome had expressly condemned the system of Copernicus, declaring it to be "philosophically absurd as well as heretical." Galileo had been enjoined, in the name of the Inquisition, to submit to this decree. Galileo submitted in appearance; but, with the subtle intellectual habitude which the religious tyranny of the times induced, and up to a certain point excused, he attempted to evade the difficulty by setting forth the system of Copernicus as being at least an hypothesis explicative of the facts. In order to this, he made use of the form which seemed to him the least compromising, namely, that of a dialogue between a peripatetic and two more or less avowed partisans of the new ideas on the systems of the world. The peripatetic is, as a matter of course, defeated at every turn; nevertheless, he is not made to play a ridiculous part. This is of import-

ance; for it appears he was not afraid to impute to a sacrificed character arguments which had really proceeded from the mouth of the reigning pope, Urban VIII., as zealous a partisan of Aristotle in philosophy as of his own authority in matters of faith.

The dialogue was published with the permission of the ecclesiastical censor. It was not until some time after that people perceived the venom which it contained. As soon as this was discovered, Galileo received a mandate for his appearance at Rome. The protection of the Grand Duke of Tuscany did not suffice to have him dispense with that journey. He had to set out in spite of his infirmities; and he arrived at Rome on the 13th February, 1633, where the palace of the Florentine ambassador was assigned as his first prison.

The case was prosecuted leisurely. On the 12th of April, Galileo was incarcerated in the Holy Office, but he was not put into the dungeon; out of regard for the Grand Duke, he was treated with kindness. On the 30th of April he returned to the palace of the ambassador, in order to recover from an illness. On the evening of the 20th of June he was again sent for to the Holy Office. He repaired thither on the morning of the 21st. On this day the official inquiry took place. In presence of the Inquisition, Galileo made no difficulty about renouncing the system of Copernicus. He resisted only on the question of intention. His adversaries, deeply hurt by the *Dialogue* on the systems of the world, reproached him for having made in that work an indirect apology for heretical opinions. He obstinately denied that he had had that intention, and maintained that he had wished only to set forth the arguments pro and con, in order to prove to strangers that if, at Rome, theological motives required the condemnation of the Copernican system, it was not because she was ignorant of the reasons which could be adduced in favour of

the system. This was subtle; but all inquiries on things which relate only to conscience necessarily imply subtilty.

Was he subjected to the torture? The silence of Galileo on that point, the absence of all details on the subject in the correspondence of Niccolini, the ambassador of the Grand Duke of Tuscany at Rome, have been invoked as proofs in the negative, and are indeed considerations of the greatest importance. It must be remembered, however, that the first thing which was demanded of Galileo, in conformity with the customs of the Inquisition, was to promise that he would not reveal anything which should take place between him and the redoubtable tribunal. To the end he adhered to this promise with a species of terror. The reports of the trial could alone solve the question; but a veritable fatality has deprived the friends of sincere history of the publication of these documents. They were brought to Paris, from the archives of the Inquisition, where they had been carefully concealed, in 1809. Somebody undertook to publish them, together with a French translation. The translation had even advanced to some considerable extent when the Restoration supervened. The pope reclaimed the documents; but Louis XVIII., out of curiosity, retained them for some time in his study. One day the packet disappeared, and was vainly sought for in Paris in all the Government offices. Rome never ceased reclaiming the papers until 1845, when M. Rossi, it is said, promised their restitution, on the condition that they should be published intact, and they were restored to the hands of Pius IX. If this statement is correct,<sup>1</sup> it is matter of surprise that a document so important should have been given up at Paris without a careful copy being previously made of it. In any case, the promise of publication, if it was made, has indeed been badly kept. At the

<sup>1</sup> It is by M. Biot, *Journal des Savants*, July 1858.

present time no portion of the original legal documents is known, except a fragment of the French translation, which was found in 1821 by M. Delambre. Monsignor Marino Marini, who has written a work on the subject, had all the papers before him; but he was careful not to give them *in extenso*. He has quoted the passages which suited his purpose. Now, the system pursued at Rome in the publication of historical documents is not of such a character as to make us feel that Monsignor Marini, in making a choice, exercised a very strict impartiality. In general Rome does not grant access to, nor permits the publication of documents, except under the implied condition that one's object is to explain away papal history. Almost all the historical documents which are published at Rome are systematically incomplete. It is believable that if Monsignor Marini found amongst the papers of the trial statements *contrary* to the thesis of Catholic apologists, he withheld them. The acidity of tone which is noticeable in his *Memoir*, and the haughty attitude which he imports into the discussion, are not reassuring. What would they not do at Rome to avoid scandal (*ad evitandum scandalum*)! The indications to be drawn from contradictory paginations, in several instances, would of itself lead one to believe that the manuscript had been mutilated before it came into his hands. We are hence obliged to read between the lines of the documents which have been given to us, and to make out thence the probable meaning of the portions cut out by the scissors of interested persons. Now it must be owned that among the published statements there are some which appear to contradict the assertions of the apologist, or at least give scope for reflection.

In a fragment of the interrogatory of the 21st of June, published by Marini, Galileo is asked whether, after the injunction placed upon him in 1616, he did not continue to advocate the Copernican idea. He



answers in the negative. Some one then informs him that they will use against him the opportune remedies of the law in this respect, that is to say, the torture: *devenietur ad torturam*, says a passage cited by Marini. The threat of the torture is hence express. Then the report adds that, seeing nothing further can be extorted from him, *remissus est in locum suum* (let him be taken back whence he came). What took place next, and what is that *locus suus* whence he was sent back? According to Marini, it was the palace of the Tuscan ambassador. But this is false, as M. Biot has aptly pointed out, for a letter from the said ambassador, dated the 26th June, asserts that Galileo was retained at the Holy Office during the whole of the time which elapsed between the interrogatory and the objurgation; it hence follows that this *locus suus* was the apartment which he occupied at the Holy Office. Marini knew of this letter, for, in reference to another question, he quotes a passage from it.

What was done with Galileo in the interval between the interrogatory and the objurgation? In the absence of authentic published documents, we are reduced to conjecture this, from the sentence of condemnation which was delivered on the 22d: "Whereas it appears to us that thou didst not tell the whole truth in regard to thine intention, we judged that it was necessary to have recourse to a *rigorous personal examination*, an examination in which, as touching the said intentions, thou hast replied like a good Catholic." Galileo denied the intention; on the 21st he was threatened with the torture, and on the evening of the 21st, or on the morning of the 22d, they proceeded to a *rigorous examination*. This examination could be nothing else than the Question accompanied by the torture. Marini maintains that, in the case of Galileo, they contented themselves with threatening it. That

might well be. It is to be remarked, however, that, up to the point of the *rigorous examination*, Galileo had not answered to the satisfaction of the judges. After the *rigorous examination*, it was found that he answered as a Catholic should. It must be owned that the conversion took place just in the nick of time. However that may be, we cannot help saying with Dr Parchappe that "the scepticism of history is the chastisement merited by the secret of the inquisitorial procedure, obstinately guarded for the last two hundred and twenty-seven years."<sup>1</sup> No doubt could have existed if Monsignor Marini had desired it; or rather, if the precious documents of the Roman archives had been placed in the hands of persons acting solely in the interest of truth.

After all, as M. Bertrand has justly pointed out in his fine study of Galileo, this is but a secondary consideration. Admitting that Galileo had been put to the Question, it is quite certain he was not mangled. In any case, a few minutes of torment, even if Galileo did endure it, would have been a small affair as compared with the moral torture which assailed his last years. The poor unfortunate lived ever after under the agony of a perpetual terror, quite secluded, speaking to no one of his discoveries and ideas, fleeing all intercourse with learned foreigners, the very approach of whom might have compromised him. And then the shame of so many evasions, tergiversations, and subtile subterfuges! It was to such moral baseness that religious terror had conducted Italy in the seventeenth century, and perhaps Galileo did not regard these as his most cruel torments.

Nothing can be indifferent to us when the matter is one pertaining to a genius like Galileo. Galileo is in truth the great founder of modern science. He is much superior, not only to Bacon, whose import-

<sup>1</sup> *Galileo, his Life, his Discoveries, and his Works.* Hachette, 1866

ance has been much exaggerated by English vanity, but also to Descartes, who did not make experiments; to Pascal, who examined nothing to the bottom, but let himself be carried away by chimeras; he is only inferior to Newton. While the scholastics of Padua were enjoying in peace the fruition which teaching bodies are accustomed to hold out to idle routine and mediocrity, Galileo was an inquirer on his own account; he studied nature instead of the old traditional class books. I have seen, at Padua, programmes of the Commencements of the seventeenth century in which his name figures, against trifling emoluments, by the side of the names of obscure pedants endowed with large prebends. The latter were regarded as the great men of the time, as an honour to the school, and as the advocates of sound philosophy. It must be that science possesses an absolute value; it must be that the divine impulse, which urges the universe towards the accomplishment of its end, must have a great interest in the discovery of truth, for the scholar, who, charged with ascertaining the laws of the *real*, prosecutes his vocation, without the hope of recompense, in spite of persecution and insults, and without taking account of advantages of every kind which are the reward of the flattering of the false opinions of men and of accommodating themselves to their mediocrity.

## JOHN CALVIN.

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M. JULES BONNET, who is already known by several excellent works upon the history of the Reformation, particularly by a biography of Olympia Morata, which is full of interest, has just published in two volumes a collection of the letters of John Calvin, written in French.<sup>1</sup> This precious correspondence has never before been collected into a complete form. "On the point of returning to God," writes Théodore de Bèze, "John Calvin, always engrossed with the concerns of the Church, commended to me his treasure ; that is to say, a vast mass of papers, desiring that, if anything was found in them which would be useful to the Churches, they should be published. This wish of the dying apostle obtained in the sixteenth century only an imperfect realisation. The struggles which absorbed the whole activity of men's minds, the catastrophes and massacres which immediately followed the death of the reformer, and, even in a greater degree, the scruples of respectful admirers, preoccupied at once with the regard due to contemporaries and the consideration demanded by a memory which was dear to them, all seemed to conspire to the postponement of the task bequeathed by Calvin to his friends. We have no longer any occasion for regret, inasmuch as a young and laborious historian has, with the piety of a disciple

<sup>1</sup> *Letters of John Calvin*, now collected for the first time, and published from the original Manuscripts. *French Letters*, 2 vols. Paris.

and the exactness of an impartial scholar, just collected together these relics of the cradle of his faith. The labour of M. Bonnet leaves only one thing to be desired, namely, that the collection of the Latin letters should be added as soon as possible to the two volumes devoted to the French correspondence. Would it not have been preferable to comprise in a single series the two sets of letters, and to present the correspondence of the reformer in a strictly chronological order? I am inclined to think it would. I do not ignore the reasons which have induced the editors to follow another plan. They thought that the French letters might possess a literary or religious interest to persons who would not read the Latin letters; but such a motive can hardly be accepted by the disinterested reader. A collection of the letters of Calvin is pre-eminently a historical document; to prize these for their literary interest is to undervalue them, and to use them as a book of edification is to mistake their purport.

Does the character of Calvin, as revealed in these new documents, differ sensibly from that which we were enabled to trace from history and the portions of his correspondence already published? It would be mere affectation to pretend such a thing. Calvin was one of those absolute characters, cast in a unique mould, which can be wholly perceived at a single glance; a single letter or act suffices to judge it by. There are no curvatures in that inflexible soul, which never once knew doubt nor hesitation. The natures which reserve for history unexpected secrets, and which in each posthumous revelation present themselves under new aspects, are those rich and flexible natures which, being superior to their actions, to their destiny, and even to their opinions, have only shown to the world one side, and have always concealed the mysterious side through which they



have communicated freely with the infinite. God, who abandons the world to the violent and the strong, almost always denies to them those subtle gifts which alone, in speculative things, lead to truth. Truth is wholly involved in nice distinctions, but in order to exercise great power in the world one must not regard nice distinctions; one must believe that one is entirely in the right, and that those who think differently are entirely wrong. A mind delicate and free from passion, critical of itself, perceives the weak points in its own armour, and is constrained at times to embrace the views of its adversaries. The man, on the other hand, who is passionate and absolute in his opinions, barely identifies his cause with that of God, and proceeds with the audacity which is the natural offspring of this assurance. The world belongs to him, and justly, for the world is only impelled forward by strong minds; but delicacy of thought is denied to him; he never sees the truth in its purity; self-deceived, he dies without attaining to wisdom.

This severe inflexibility, which is the essential characteristic of the man of action, Calvin possessed in an eminent degree. I do not know that there could be found a more complete type of ambition, a man eager to make his ideas predominate because he believed them to be true. Heedless of riches, titles or honours, unostentatious, modest in his life, apparent humility, everything made subservient to the desire to form others in its own image. There is hardly anyone, save Ignatius Loyola, who could dispute the palm with him in these terrible transports; but Loyola added to them Spanish ardour and an enthusiasm of imagination which have a special beauty of their own: he still continued to be an old reader of the Amadis, pursuing, after the fashion of worldly chivalry, spiritual chivalry, whilst that Calvin possessed all the sternness of passion, without a spark

of enthusiasm. One might say he was a sworn interpreter who arrogated to himself the divine right to define what was Christian or anti-Christian. His correspondence, elevated, grave and stoical, is wholly lacking in charm; it has no life: one never feels a spontaneous glow nor hears a whisper from the heart. His style, likewise, is strong and nervous, but dry, dull, involved, often obscure, because, doubtless, the terrors and the restraints of the times obliged him to express himself ambiguously. It is said that the Latin letters exhibit a more tender side of his nature: and this is precisely one of the reasons why it is to be regretted that M. Bonnet has not permitted us to read side by side the two sets of correspondence. In the one I can perceive nothing but sternness: grave conviction, a peevish temper, seeing sin in everything, interpreting life as an expiation. For a moment, on the occasion of the birth of his child, he deigns to smile, but this is so strangely out of tune with his nature that he soon relapses into his former sadness. "It grieves me that I cannot be with you for at least half-a-day, to smile with you while they try to make the little infant smile, under penalty, however, of enduring its weeping and wailing. For that keynote is the one first struck at the beginning of this life, so that we may laugh in good earnest when we go out of it."

It is surprising that a man who, both in his life and in his writings, shows himself to us so little sympathetic, should have been in his age the centre of an immense movement, and that that harsh and severe tone should have exercised such a great influence upon the minds of contemporaries. How, for example, was it that one of the most distinguished women of her time, Renée of France, in her court at Ferrara, surrounded by the flower of the best minds of Europe, was smitten by that severe master, and drawn by him into a course which must have been strewn with so many thorns. One cannot exercise

that species of austere seduction except when one pursues real conviction. Without that lively, profound and sympathetic ardour, which was one of the secrets of the success of Luther, without the charm and the perilously languishing softness of Francis of Sales, Calvin succeeded, because he was the most Christian man of his age, in an age and country which were ripe for a Christian reaction. Nay, his moroseness itself was the condition of his success: for people seriously religious are more readily won over by severity than by condescension: they prefer narrow ways to wide and even paths, and the surest method of attaching them to one is to demand much of them, without affecting to give them anything by way of return. Is it necessary to add that the essential qualities of rectitude, honour and conviction which appear in the correspondence published by M. Bonnet, completely exonerate the reformer from the calumnies invented by hatred and party spirit? Two letters concocted by a clumsy impostor in order to defile his memory, and which superficial historians, since Voltaire, have tacitly agreed to reproduce, are triumphantly relegated to the rank of apocryphas. If M. Bonnet's argument on this point had not been indisputable, it would have had a decisive confirmation in the new researches of M. Charles Read upon the same subject, researches founded upon a comparison of the pretended autographs of Calvin, with fragments of the same sort from his own hand.<sup>1</sup>

The inevitable consequence of the character and the position of Calvin was intolerance. Whenever a man permits himself to be dominated by an opinion which he believes to be absolute and complete truth, so plain that only blindness or guilt refuse to embrace it, he necessarily becomes intolerant. It is, at first glance, a strange contradiction to find Calvin

<sup>1</sup> *Bulletin of the French Protestant Historical Society*, 4th year. 1st series.

vehemently demanding liberty for himself and his, while refusing it to others. But this in reality is quite simple; he believed otherwise than the Catholics, but he believed as absolutely as they. What we rightly or wrongly believe to be the essence of nascent Protestantism, viz.: freedom of belief, the right of the individual to choose his own creed, was little dreamed of in the sixteenth century. Without doubt this appeal from the Church to the Scriptures, which constituted the soul of the Reformation, turned in the end to the profit of criticism, and in this sense the first reformers are really the founders of liberty of thought. But this was without their either knowing or deserving it. The Catholics have said with some reason of the French Revolution: "Raised against us, it has, with God's help, wrought for us;" the philosophers can say the same of the Reformation. History affords numerous examples where the doctrines of a party and the secret tendencies which that party represents have shown themselves to be in flat contradiction. In the quarrel between the Jesuits and the Jansenists, the Jesuits contended for a doctrine more conformed to reason and more conformable to liberty than that of their adversaries, and that notwithstanding Jansenism was at bottom a liberal movement around which we can conceive the most enlightened and honest men might have rallied.

That violent zeal which urges the man of conviction to procure the salvation of souls by means of a fierce struggle, and without taking any account of liberty, shines forth through the whole of the correspondence of Calvin. Writing to the regent of England during the minority of Edward VI.: "From what I hear, Monseigneur, you have two species of mutineers who have risen against the King and State. One side are fantastical persons who, under the colour of the Gospels, would put everything into confusion; on the other, are persons stubbornly

attached to the superstitions of the Antichrist of Rome. Both together richly deserve to be repressed by the sword which has been committed to you, with the view that they attach themselves not only to the king, but also to God, who has placed him in the royal seat, and has committed to you the protection of His people as well as of His Majesty." The model he proposes to him, as well as to the King of England later on, is that of the holy King Josias, whom God extolled for "having abolished and harrowed out everything which served only to nourish superstition." The example that he warned them against was that of the kings who, "having overthrown the idolaters, but not having completely eradicated them," are blamed for "not having levelled the temples and places of foolish devotion." Like the Catholics, Calvin claims toleration, not in the name of liberty, but in the name of truth. When he engages the civil magistrates to use rigour against "the incorrigibles who contemn spiritual pains and those who profess new dogmas," the idea never occurs to him that the same principle could be turned against his own followers; and, desirous of exculpating himself from the murder of Servetus, he writes without unconcern this terrible title, *Defensio orthodoxæ fidei, . . . ubi ostenditur hæreticos jure gladii coercendos esse*.<sup>1</sup>

These violences astonished nobody, and were in some sort a common right. Bolsec, thrust out of Geneva; Gruet, decapitated; Gentilis, escaping only for a time the scaffold through a retractation; Servetus, submitting to his atrocious corporal punishment in presence of Fârel—are no isolated acts. Bitterness and threatenings flow naturally from the pen of Calvin:—"Knowing in part what manner of man he was," wrote he to Madame de Cany, touching some unknown person, "could I have had my way I

<sup>1</sup> A defence of the orthodox faith, . . . in which it is proved that heretics may be rightly coerced by the sword.



would gladly have seen him rot in a ditch, and his coming delighted me as much as if he had cleft my heart with a dagger. . . . Be assured, Madame, had he not got away so quickly, in the discharge of my duty it would not have been my fault if he escaped the flames." We recognise here the terrible frankness of him who wrote *à propos* of Servetus: *Si venerit, modo valeat mea auctoritas, vivum exire non patiar*,<sup>1</sup> who himself furnished to the inquisition of Vienne the proofs against that unfortunate man, and sent to the Archbishop of Lyons leaves from the book which were to be made use of to light his funeral pile.<sup>2</sup>

Death itself did not appease him. Three years after the execution of Gruet, there was found in a garret an autograph work, in which the rebellious canon, in rage and despair, gave utterance to the thoughts which, in more favoured times, he would have had the right to exhibit with temperance and wisdom. Calvin, judging that that writing had not been sufficiently condemned by the death of its author, had it burned by the hands of the common hangman, and himself drew up the censure upon it. In place of the pity called forth by the ravings of an exasperated man, who avenged his confinement by violent speech, he breaks out into a fury against that which he calls "the blasphemies so execrable that there is no human creature which ought not to tremble at hearing them." This unfortunate man, destined to death by a fatality, guilty of having said in bad style in the sixteenth century what, if said in the good style of the nineteenth century, is to him "the adherent of an infected and worse than diabolical sect . . . belching out execrations that ought to make a man's hair stand on end: infections, stinking enough

<sup>1</sup> Should he come and my authority hold, I will not suffer him to go away alive.

<sup>2</sup> See the fine study of M. E. Saisset, on Servetus in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, February and March 1848.

to poison a whole country, that all people of conscience ought to ask God's pardon for the blasphemy that has been heaped on His name among them."

The severity of Calvin in that which touches private morals astonishes and offends us even more than those which orthodoxy exacted from him. Too sternly bent on cheapening human liberty, and exclusively preoccupied by the reform of manners, he falsified at every point the idea of the State, and made of Geneva a sort of theocratical republic, governed by the ministers who carried their inquisition into every department of life. A spiritual State was established at Geneva in the sixteenth century, like as in the Italy of our own time. An annual visitation from house to house was established, in order to interrogate the residents as to their faith, to discern the ignorant and the hardened from the faithful. The most bitter irony flowed from the pen of the reformer against the set of *libertins*, who made a fruitless resistance to his vigorous rule. "There are indeed a few complaints from people who cannot endure chastisement. Even the wife of the man who is to visit you (Amadée Perrin), and who wrote you from Berne, lifted herself up rather haughtily. But she was obliged to get away into the country, not finding the town healthy for her. The others lower their heads instead of raising their horns. One there is (Gruet) who will probably have a very heavy cost to pay. I opine it will be a matter of life with him. The young people think that I press them too hard, but if the reins were not held with a firm hand their case would be the more pitiable. We must secure their welfare, spite of their distaste for it." And again: "True it is, Satan has plenty of matches hereabouts, but the flame goes out like a trodden spark. The capital punishment inflicted on one of their companions (Gruet) has made them draw in their horns considerably. As to your guest

(Amadée Perrin), I cannot tell how he will carry himself when he comes back. His wife, however, has played the *diablesse* to such a degree that she was obliged to get away to the country. He has been absent now about two months. He must bear himself meekly on his return."

Let us hasten to say that it would be an act of supreme injustice to judge Calvin's character by these vigorous words and actions. Moderation and tolerance, supreme virtues in critical ages like ours, could not have place in an age which was dominated by ardent and absolute convictions. Each party, persuaded that sound belief was the supreme good, compared with which terrestrial existence counted for little, and assured that it possessed exclusively the truth, must hence be inexorable as regards other parties. Hence, also, a terrible recrimination. The man who makes light of his own existence, and is ready to yield that up for his faith, is strongly tempted to make light of the life of others. Human life, of which temperate epochs are justly so saving, is sacrificed with frightful prodigality. The abominable excesses of 1793 can be explained only by one of those crises when human life sank, if I may say so, to the lowest price. Men's minds are seized with a sort of frenzy: each accepts and gives death with equal disregard. Let us imagine to ourselves the state of exaltation in which the fervent disciple of the Reformation lived when the news arrived from Paris, Lyons or Chambery of the tortures endured by his co-religionists. History has not insisted sufficiently upon the atrocity of these persecutions, and upon the resignation, courage and serenity of those who suffered them. There are here pages worthy of the first ages of the Church, and I doubt not that if an earnest, simple narrative were made of the writings and letters of the times of those sublime combats, they would equal in beauty the

ancient martyrology. The voice of Calvin in these trying moments attained a plenitude and an elevation truly admirable. His letters to the martyrs of Lyons, of Chamberry, to the prisoners of Châtelet, sound like an echo of the heroic times of Christianity, of detached pages from the writings of Tertullian or Cyprien. I own, that before having been introduced by M. Bonnet into this bloody circle of martyrs, I understood neither the noble-mindedness of the victims, nor the ferocity of their executioners. Other persecutions have no doubt been more murderous: Philip II. poured out more blood; what persecutor would not pale before the Duke D'Albe? But it was faith, nevertheless, which, in Spain and in the Low Countries, lighted the piles and prepared the scaffolds. These hecatombs offered up to truth (that is to say, what people believed to be such) possessed a distinct grandeur of their own: and one need but half pity those who succumbed in that *grandiose* struggle in which each fought for his God: faith immolated them just as faith sustained them. But that Sardanapalus (this is the name under which Frances I. figures in the correspondence of Calvin), in order to subserve his political interests or to preserve intact his pleasures, should constitute himself the avenger of a belief which he did not hold, is at once odious and horrible. The absolute faith of Spain covers with a kind of poetry the glare of these atrocities. One conceives a high idea of human nobleness to see the barbarian, delivered over to all the impetuosity of his instincts, prefer thus faith to life, to suffer and to cause death for an abstract opinion. But when witnessing in the land of indifference, in the full light of civilisation, noble women burned, infants tortured, tongues cut out, multitudes of unfortunates soaking and languishing at the bottoms of the ditches of Châtelet, awaiting their punishment, and the king, in order to prove his zeal, declaring "that he

was dissatisfied with the court of Parliament in Paris," and characterising his counsellors as being remiss and indolent, because they did not burn their victims with more haste, the only sentiment is indignation, and leads one to doubt the moral worth of a country which could allow and provoke this execrable sporting with life.

We must not hence be astonished that Calvin appears to us so stern, so bitter in his conviction, so intolerant of that of others. How can one cherish a half belief in that for which one is proscribed? What faith so wavering that it would not become fanatical under torture? The pleasure of suffering for one's faith is so great that, more than once, passionate natures have been known to embrace opinions in order to have the pleasure of suffering for them. Persecution in this sense is an essential condition of all religious achievements. It has a marvellous efficacy in fixing ideas, for chasing away doubts, and it is permissible to believe that what is called (wrongly, in my opinion) the scepticism of our times would yield before this energetic remedy. We are timid, undecided; we hardly believe in our own ideas; perhaps, if it were given to us to be persecuted for them, we should end by believing in them. Let us not desire this; inasmuch as then we might become *intolerants* and persecutors in our turn.

That this severity of character, which constituted the force of Calvin, is prejudicial to the development of intellect, and excludes the flexibility of the free soul that is in every way drawn on by the disinterested love of beauty and truth, is incontestable. But strength of action is only to be purchased at that price: largeness of mind can found nothing, it is narrowness of mind that unites men. Founders generally manifest themselves to us as possessing narrow minds, and not at all amiable. We are surprised at first, in running through the letters of Cal-



vin, to find in them the correspondence of a statesman and an administrator, engrossed with affairs and details, rather than of a thinker or an ascetic. His theology even possesses little of the transcendental: sufficiently disengaged from scholasticism, more legislator than theologian, in operating his reform he is not swayed by speculative considerations, but by views of practical morality. His long professions of faith scarcely furnish a line that the thought of our times could assimilate with advantage: the creed is stripped of all its grandeur: their philosophy is feeble: all imagination, all poetry have disappeared. But it would be unjust to stop here. What matters it that Calvin was a mediocre philosopher and theologian, if this mediocrity itself was the condition of the work he had to accomplish? Would a solitary and passionless thinker have succeeded as he did in lifting the incubus from the Middle Ages, and in boldly rolling back the history of Christianity for ten centuries? Would Calvinism again, without its powerful aristocratic organisation, without the vigorous tutelage to which it subjected the individual conscience, have victoriously resisted such furious attacks, and preserved in France an imperishable haven? Force does not ordinarily succeed except at the cost of the great sacrifices demanded by liberty: and one is fain to believe that, apart from his sombre and severe character, the attempt of Calvin would have been, like so many others, only an abortive effort to escape from the enormous pressure that Catholicism had at last begun to exercise on the human mind.

The excellent work of M. Bonnet must be embraced amongst the most essential documents that the historian of the revolutions of the sixteenth century will have to consult. Despite his eager and avowed convictions, M. Bonnet recognises the blemishes which disfigure the life of the reformer, and blames his intolerance while excusing it, as he

should, by the temper of his age. Let us accept, then, as a good augury, the promise which the learned editor makes in the preface, of giving us a history of Calvin compiled from original and authentic documents. Nothing less than the prospect of that great work will make us wait patiently for the realisation of another engagement which M. Bonnet has contracted with the public; I mean a *Life of Rénée de France*. As for me, I regret this postponement, which will deprive us for so long a time yet from knowing, as well as she deserves, one of the most enlightened women of her century, and one of the most noble souls of all times. I know the reasons which have determined M. Bonnet to give priority to the austere reformer. Guided by considerations, the most pure and most disinterested, he desires first of all to make converts, and prefers that which he regards as a duty to his own tastes and success. But even from the point of view of proselytism, I will take the liberty to combat his resolution. The Duchess of Ferrara is an apostle better adapted to our times than Calvin. Women carry their seductive influences even into Theology: they are privileged to have an opinion on these matters, and the passion which they throw into it gives it all the more charm. Rénée of France, spending the whole day in reading treatises upon the mass and predestination, artlessly seeking for the whole truth in regard to them, and enduring for her conviction the most heroic sufferings, is the legend of Calvinism. The book in which M. Bonnet retraces that charming spectacle will be a ravishing book (I need no other proof than the episode of Olympia Morata, already published, together with the interest that M. Bonnet can spread over that persecuted erudite); at the same time, I venture to hope that, even with his talent and his predilections, he will succeed in making Calvin an amiable personage.

THE AUTHOR OF THE *IMITATION OF  
JESUS CHRIST, THOMAS A-KEMPIS,  
GERSEN, AND CABANAC.*

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IT is an immense advantage to a book destined to be popular that it be anonymous. Obscurity of origin is the condition of prestige. Familiarity with the author belittles the work, and in spite of ourselves we perceive behind its most beautiful passages a writer whose business it is to polish phrases and to combine effect. Wolf, in showing that neither the *Iliad* nor the *Odyssey* is the result of the lucubrations of a poet writing reflectively and coherently, but the impersonal creation of the epic genius of Greece, has furnished the prime condition of the serious admiration of Homer. The claim of the Bible springs in great part from the fact that the author of each book is so frequently unknown. This is the reason why the fragments which constitute the second part of the book of Isaiah, "Arise, shine, Jerusalem, . . ." appear to us so beautiful, inasmuch as we there discern the cry of hope from an unknown prophet, the greatest, perhaps, of them all, announcing during the captivity the future glory of Sion! Its perfection, too, is enhanced from the fact that the author himself is oblivious, to the extent, that he neglected to sign his name, or, that his book responded so completely to the opinions of the age when humanity itself might, so to speak, be substituted in his place, and may have adopted as its own pages which, it was acknowledged, it has inspired.

Criticism, the requirements of which are not always in accord with those of artless admiration, cannot be arrested by such considerations. The more the author is unknown, the more does criticism strive to penetrate the mystery of the great pseudonymous works. On occasions it would be matter for regret if she were to succeed in tearing aside the veil which constitutes a part of their beauty. Frequently, however, it happens that it reveals the historical circumstances which, better than the insignificant letters of a proper name, aid us in placing the anonymous work in its proper place, and in restoring to it its first significance.

The book which, under the faulty title of *Imitation of Jesus Christ*, has achieved such an extraordinary piece of good fortune, has exercised more than any other work the ingenuity of scholars. In the history of literature there is no work, perhaps, whose paternity is more obscure. The author has not left a trace of himself. Time and place do not exist for him. We might even say that it was inspiration from on high, one which could never cross the intellect of a man.<sup>1</sup> Never since the absolutely impersonal narratives of the first evangelists has a voice so completely disengaged from all special individuality spoken to man from God, as well as of man's duties.

<sup>1</sup> One of the oldest titles is *Interior Consolations*. The actual title is proved by the rubric of the first chapter, which, by an abuse of frequent occurrence in the Middle Ages, has been applied to the collection of the four books. It is in the same way that certain songs *de Gesta* are called *Enfances*, because they commence with a recital of the marvellous infancy of the heroes. The unity of the book of the *Imitation*, and the modifications to which it may have been subjected, call for a searching examination. On this subject it is necessary to read the learned preface which M. Victor le Clerc has placed at the head of the splendid edition executed by the Imperial Printing Establishment for the Universal Exposition.

The three principal authors for whom the honour has been claimed of having composed this admirable book are a-Kempis, Gerson, and the Benedictine, Jean Gersen, Abbot of Verceil. The rights of the last were at first rejected as chimerical, but we have seen his claim suddenly increase in consequence of an unexpected discovery, and especially by the impossibilities which a critic has brought to light in respect of the other hypotheses. M. Paravia, professor at the University of Turin, has just published a new defence of the claims of his countryman.<sup>1</sup> If he has not added any new fact to those of a similar nature which M. de Gregory has laboriously collected, he has, at least, earned the merit of dispelling the evil impressions and the digressions by which that patient collector had injured his cause. We can only regret that the last defender of Verceil pretensions has not known better than some of his predecessors to place himself above the inherent defect of Italian criticism—I mean that natural vanity, so much out of place in literary history, which inspires in the reader a kind of defiance even against the highest tests of deduction and the most decisive reasonings.

On my part I admit as very probable the sentiment of M. Paravia, especially as regards his negative conclusions against Gerson and a-Kempis. The opinion which ascribes to Gerson the book of the *Imitation*, is, from every point of view, unsustainable. This book does not figure in the list of the writings of the chancellor set out by his brother himself. A personage so celebrated in his lifetime would not have been able, even if he had wished, to preserve his anonymity in respect of a book which obtained so quickly to renown, and in a century in which publicity was already so extended. There is, besides, a strange contrast between the rude scholastic, whose life was filled up by so many contests, and the pacific pedant

<sup>1</sup> *Dell' autore del libro De Imitatione Christi.* Torino, 1853.



who wrote those pages, at once so full of suavity and of artless abandon. A man so engrossed in all the struggles of the age would never have been able to express himself in accents so refined and penetrating. The politician carries with him into his retreat his habits of restless activity. There is a certain delicacy of conscience which is irrevocably tarnished by business, and it is rare to find, at least in the past, a work distinguished by its moral sentiment as being the outcome of the leisure hours of a statesman. Gerson, in his Celestine retreat at Lyons, continued to occupy himself with all the quarrels of the age, and we know that when his brother asked him, in his latter days, to compose for the community a moral treatise, based on Holy Writ, he was unable to accomplish it.

It is far from my purpose to belittle so extraordinary a man—one who exercised in his life such high authority in the Gallican Church, as well as in the University of Paris. But it is evident that the author of the treatise *De auferibilitate Papæ* had nothing in common with the author of the *Imitation*. The latter had, it is true, mixed in the world, for without that would he have been able to employ such delicate accents in speaking of vanity? Nevertheless, everything goes to show that he retired very early from the bustles of life. "When I wander far from thee, thou hast brought me back to serve thee. . . . How can I render thanks to thee for this mercy?" From the experiences he had in the world, there is nothing either of regrets or bitterness to be found in his work, but, on the contrary, experience and consummate wisdom. "We feel in it," says M. Michelet, "a powerful maturity, a soft and rich flavour of the autumn; there is in it none of the acerbity of youthful passion. In order to have reached that state, he must at times have loved well, hated, then loved again."

Nothing could be less Gallican, nothing could be less Universitarian than this book. Just think of it! This charming flower was doomed to fade and wither on the pavements of the Sorbonne! That the protestation of the soul against the subtleties of the school should have parted company with the *ergo!* Gerson, the dialectician by pre-eminence; Gerson, the enemy of religious orders, the adversary of the mystics, the representative of the eager Gallican, should have found in his soul, hardened by the syllogism, the sweetest inspiration of the life monastic! What could be more impossible? Let us add that the style of Gerson possesses a barbarism altogether scholastic. That of the *Imitation* is not Latin, it is true, but it is yet full of charm. It must adopt a language of its own in order to be what it is—very little classic, yet admirably adapted to express the finest shades of the interior life, as well as of sentiment.

The Thomas a-Kempis hypothesis is but little more acceptable than that of Gerson, although it embraces, from other points of view, a certain amount of truth. The formula which is found at the end of the Antwerp manuscript: *Finitus et completus per manus fratris Thomæ, anno domini 1441*, indicates, no doubt, the hand of the copyist or the compiler, but not that of the author. And yet renown has not acted in a purely capricious manner in the honour which it has given to the scribe of Zwoll. The truth, as it seems to me, is that Thomas a-Kempis was the author, not of the book itself, but of the unheard-of vogue which it obtained, beginning with the second half of the fifteenth century, over all Christendom. A-Kempis composed a collection of ascetic opuscles, at the head of which he placed, as distinct treatises, the four books which, till then little known, became afterwards, under the title of *Imitation of Jesus Christ*, the code of religious life. This collection was much appreciated in the Low Countries and on the banks

of the Rhine. Many confraternities became eager to have copies "made of the book written by Brother Thomas." In one sense the pious a-Kempis has, then, veritable claims to the book of the *Imitation*. He did not compose it, but compiled it, and we can say that, without him, this production, so characteristic of Christian mysticism, might have been lost, or might have remained unheard of. The Middle Ages has thus a few characteristic copyists altogether estimable, who, by their studious habits, attained to a position of great intellectual nobleness. The gentle and guileless soul of this good scribe, who is declared to have everywhere sought repose without finding it, "except in a little book in a little corner" (*in angello cum libello*), was worthy of responding, across two centuries of oblivion, to the equally pure but more elevated soul of the unknown ascetic whose destiny would not have been completed if it had not been precluded by obscurity, to the incomparable *éclat* which the future had reserved for it.

It is not one of the least singular things of the history of the *Imitation* that the revolution of July had to be called in à *propos* of the discovery which has thrown the greatest light upon its origins. On the 4th August, 1830, M. de Gregory, impelled by curiosity to the Place du Louvre, entered the house of Techener, and discovered upon the shelf of the librarian, beloved of bibliophiles, an old manuscript of his favourite book which had belonged for several generations to the Avogardi of Cerione, in Piedmont. Some too obliging paleographers may have declared to the happy author of this godsend that the manuscript could not be posterior to the year 1300. Such a doubt, in the circumstances, is allowable. The manuscript, while at the same time it drew attention to the Avogardi, also led to the discovery of a family journal which, bearing date the 15th February 1349, contained a note from which resulted that the

precious volume had been *for a long time* in the possession of the Avogardi as a hereditary treasure.<sup>1</sup> When we can grasp an exact idea of the value of a book belonging to the Middle Ages, we can cheerfully admit that the manuscript of the Avogardi must have for long been almost unique, and that the work was the almost exclusive property of some religious houses of subalpine Italy, up to the commencement of the fifteenth century, the epoch in which Gerson, and especially a-Kempis, established its celebrity. On the other hand, a considerable number of old manuscripts attribute the work to one Abbé *Jean Gesen, Gessen, Gersen, or Jean de Cabanac*. The name of Gersen is not free from all difficulty, inasmuch as it cannot be maintained to the utmost that there is here but an alteration of the name of Gerson. But the name of Jean de Cabanac, about which we cannot suppose there is any error, and which is to be read in several manuscripts in the Imperial Library, is altogether decisive, and it is clearly that name which criticism must first dispose of. Now, *Cabanacum* or *Cabalicum* is probably Cavaglia in the province of Bielle, where the name of *Gersen, Garsen, Garson*, has been preserved until this day. Seeing, however, that one Jean Gersen, Abbé of Saint-Etienne of Verceil at the commencement of the thirteenth century, is believed to have been found, we are able to guess, with a somewhat strong probability, at the personage so long and so curiously

<sup>1</sup> "Post divisionem factam cum fratre meo Vincentio, qui Ceredonii habitat, in signum fraterni amoris . . . dono ille pretiosum codicem de Imitatione Christi, quod hoc ab agnatibus meis longa manu teneo, nam nonnulli antenates mei hujus jam recordarunt." We may add, at the same time, that this text responds so well to the requirements of the cause advocated by M. Gregory that we cannot be blamed for doubting, in some respects, its authenticity. It would be desirable that the journal preserved at Bielle be examined by a paleographer who is at once impartial and thoroughly capable.

sought after. By good luck, the case, for all that, is not the less mysterious, for one knows but the spelling of the name of Gersen, and there is nothing to trouble the imagination in the dreams which one is at liberty to indulge in respect of that pious unknown person.

Be that as it may, two important results appear henceforth to acquire relative importance in respect of the subject we are discussing. First, the book belongs to the thirteenth century, to the flower of the Middle Ages, and not to its decadence. One could have been able to divine this, even though the texts had not apprised us of it. Nothing could be more sad, cold and colourless, than the close of the Middle Ages, which, from 1300 to 1450, had been anxiously expecting the great revival. The *Imitation* does not belong to that sombre period, so full of discontentment, aspirations, and upheavals. The griefs of the Holy Mother Church, the reform of its head and its members, the great lamentations over the prostitution of Babylon, the Apocalypse invoked against the simoniacal papacy of Avignon—these are the ever present thoughts of the contemporaries of the Councils of Constance and Bâle. There is nothing of all that in the *Imitation*. We see there a peaceable recluse, happy with his own thoughts, unconcerned as to the fate of the Church, without any preoccupation as to the future of the world. His mortification is not of the kind which succeeds great eras, and which was so sensibly felt about the year 1350. It is rather that of an epoch which is little disturbed, and is the prelude of great activity. Scholasticism was already born, but not as yet wholly pervading; the soul still retained its liberty. Scholasticism, against which the excellent abbot protested, not belonging to the second period, was represented by Saint Thomas, accepted by the Church, and identified with theology to such



a point that a cardinal made bold to declare that, if Aristotle had not lived, something would have been lacking in its dogmas. The scholasticism which excited the antipathies of that refined and charming soul is the scholasticism of the realists and nominalists, that of Abélard and of Guillaume de Champeaux, the *scientia clamorosa* of Mount Saint-Geneviève, wholly engrossed with definitions and genus and species.<sup>1</sup> The discipline of the school, commencing with the end of the thirteenth century, had become so absolute that nobody would have been able to endure it; and not a voice was raised against it until the Renaissance. The German mystics, Eckard, Tauler, Henri Suso, who alone had perceived the nothingness of this science of an abstract and emaciated God, had, like the others, to submit to its influence. They cited Aristotle and Averroès; they imbibed from all manner of impure sources. In the case of the author of the *Imitation*, we find, on the other hand, virgin thought which has not been contaminated by any profane contact; the Bible, the Fathers, the Saints, that was the extent of the pious ascetic's reading. I might affirm that such a book could not have been written by any of the people about Saint Thomas, considering the pedantic habits which the writer manifests throughout, in the thirteenth or fourteenth century.

Religious life, as it is presented to us in the book of the *Imitation*, is equally applicable to the first half of the thirteenth century. This life still manifests itself under the Benedictine hood; the complaints of the author, and his anxiety for reform, embrace a circle of ideas very analogous to those of Saint Bernard. There is no trace of the immense revolution accomplished in religious life by the mendicant orders. Where the author wishes to cite to his brethren models of young orders, and imbued with full

<sup>1</sup> Liv. 1<sup>er</sup>. chap. iii. "Quid curæ nobis die generibus et speciebus?"

fervour, he cites the foundations of the eleventh and twelfth centuries—the Chartreux, the Cistercians. Here we have evidently the last breath of monasticism in its antique and pure form, before the radical reform to which it was subjected in the middle of the thirteenth century; a life sufficiently free and contented, devoid of knavish practices, holiness of soul and not of mere exterior. Once, it is true (Liv. III. chap. i.), we find the *humble Saint Francis* cited. But this passage, which, moreover, is suspected of being interpolated, is far from disproving our thesis. Such an epithet, subsequent to 1250, when Saint Francis had become a second Christ, a sort of incarnation, “a sun which shines from Assisi just as the other shines from the Ganges” (Daute, *Paradis*, chap. xi.), would have been little understood. We may remark, however, that the phrase cited is not textual, and seems only to be hearsay. In 1215 the patriarch of the mendicants removed to Verceil; Gersen then became Abbot of Saint-Etienne. He may have already seen the celebrated saint, and gathered from his lips the phrase which was thereafter engraven on his memory.

A second result, which appears very probable, is that the book of the *Imitation* originally appeared in Italian. It bears marks of the genius of the latter, superficial yet limpid, far removed from abstract speculations, yet marvellously in keeping with practical philosophical researches. Lofty, transcendental mysticism has never been the *forte* of Italy. The direction which enthusiasm takes there is in an especial manner political and moral. When compared with Saint Theresa and Catherine de Siena, the great Italian mystic is in reality nothing but political. To conciliate different cities, to negotiate between the Guelphs and the Ghibelins, to measure the pretensions of the rival popes, that has been its history. From Petrarch to Manzoni and Pellico, we

can trace in Italy an unbroken series of minds, refined and distinguished, moderately ambitious in philosophy, though very delicate in morals, and at the head of these I should place the author of the *Imitation*. It is most closely allied to the spiritual family of the Johns of Parma and the Ubertins of Casale, who, starting from the mysterious Abbot of Calabria, Joachim of Flor, if you will, under the banner of the "Eternal Gospel," joined hands with the order of Saint Francis, and continued in Italy, during the Middle Ages, the cult of the free spirit.

On the other hand, the Low Countries and the Rhine provinces were destined, by reason of the placid mysticism which they inspired, to become the adopted country of the *Imitation*. Cradled in Italy, it came first to be appreciated in the country of Ruysbrock, Gérard Groot, and of a-Kempis. We may even assert, further, that this book is in nowise French. France has never been fully convinced of the vanity of the world; she has hardly ever taken up the latter theme, except as a commonplace to lend effect to the developments of oratory. An exact and sound appreciation of terrestrial things,—that is her *forte*. France, by reason of this essential characteristic, is neither poetical nor mystical; the essence of poetry and mysticism consists in supernaturalism. Now, the French mind is incomparably the most perfectly in harmony with the proportions of our planet; it has gauged its dimensions with the eye, and does not go beyond that.

When seeking for the origin of this idea of the *vanity of the world*, which has become the basis of Christian mysticism, we are led to the book of Ecclesiastes, in which is to be found its first expression. Now, the book of Ecclesiastes belongs, as we gather from its style, to the basest epoch of the Hebrew language, and is without doubt posterior to the Captivity. There is in it a compara-

tively modern idea, which, on the one hand, allied to the character of the Semitic race, treats of everything in an egotistical and personal manner; on the other, to a lack of curiosity, and to the inferiority of the scientific faculties which characterise that same race. It is assumed that Solomon, after having exhausted science, power and pleasure, arrived finally at the conclusion—*Vanity of vanities, all is vanity*. Never had such an idea occurred to the Indo-European peoples, not even to the Greeks or the Romans, who did not look beyond the present life, and, until their conversion to Jewish and Christian ideas, were unacquainted with the malady of mortification. Christianity rendered this sentiment predominant, and made it one of the most essential elements of its eloquence. Until the beginning of the fifth century the world had lived on these two phrases—*Vanity of vanities. . . . One thing is needful*. The *Imitation* is the most perfect and the most attractive expression of this system, grand and poetical undoubtedly, but a sentiment which the modern spirit could only accept with a great many reserves.

Mysticism, in fact, neglected too much one essential element in human nature, namely, curiosity; that charm which carries man to penetrate the secret of things, and which becomes, to use the expression of Leibnitz, a mirror of the universe. In our days, Ecclesiastes may no longer affirm, "There is nothing new under the sun; that which is is that which has been: that which has been is that which shall be." Ecclesiastes had only perceived one point in the universality of things which had been fully proved; it regarded the firmament as a solid vault, and the sun as a globe suspended in the air; history, that other world, did not exist for it. Ecclesiastes had perceived, I am fain to believe, all that the heart of man is



capable of feeling, but it had not conjectured all that man is capable of knowing. In our time the human mind outruns science: in our day science outruns the human mind. I cannot admit that he who knows, whether as poet or philosopher, all that is known or may become known to the Academy of Sciences and the Academy of Inscriptions, may still affirm that to increase knowledge is to increase pain. . . . I have applied my heart to knowledge, and I have seen that it is the worst occupation that God has given to the sons of men." On the contrary, it seems to me that the human mind, in our age, will emerge from the consumptive state into which so many disappointments have plunged it, first, by the moral sentiment, which in noble natures has the privilege of surviving all manner of deceptions, next, by curiosity, by that penchant which makes one, though abused, attach oneself to this world, and to find it worthy of study and attention.

Yes, undoubtedly, there is one thing needful. It is an apt phrase, which must be accepted in its fullest philosophical extent, as the principle of all spiritual nobleness, and, though dangerous by its brevity, as the expressive formula of the highest morality. But asceticism, in proclaiming this simplification of life, understands the one thing needful in such a narrow sense, that its principle becomes, in process of time, for the human mind an intolerable chain. Amongst intellectual things which are wholly sanctified are to be distinguished the sacred and the profane. The profane, thanks to the instincts of Nature, which are stronger than the principles of an exclusive asceticism, was not altogether banished; although vanity, it is tolerated. Sometimes, even, the expression has been softened to the extent of calling it the least vain of the vanities; but if logic had been given free play, it would have been remorselessly proscribed: this was a weakness to which the perfect man succumbed. Thus



human nature has been mutilated in its noblest part. In reality there is in the life spiritual very few acts altogether profane. One thing is needful, but this one thing embraces the infinite. Everything whose objects are the pure forms of truth, beauty, and good morals; that is to say, to take the expression which the respect of humanity has most consecrated—God himself perceived and felt the cognition of that which is true, and the love of that which is beautiful—all this is sacred, all this is worthy of the passion of the highest souls. For the rest, we heartily agree with "The Preacher," it is only vanity and vexation of spirit.

This is what the author of the *Imitation* has but imperfectly understood. He never issued forth of his cell at Verceil. He read only the first line of Aristotle, *Omnis homo naturaliter scribere desiderat*, and he closed the wholly scandalous book. "Of what use is it," he said, "to have a knowledge of things upon which we shall not be examined until the Day of Judgment?" (Book I. chaps. ii. and iii.) It is by this that it is incomplete, but it is also by this that it charms us. How I should like to be a painter, in order to present him as I conceive him, amiable and collected, seated in his oak arm-chair, attired in the beautiful costume of the Benedictines of Mount-Cassin! Through the trellis of his window we should see the world adorned with an azure tint, as in the fourteenth century miniatures; in the foreground, a country dotted with slender trees, after the manner of Perugia; on the horizon, the summits of the Alps covered with snow . . . . It is thus that he appears to me at Verceil itself, spreading out the manuscripts deposited in the Dome, and some of which, perhaps, have passed through his hands.

The monastic life, amongst many other excellent results, has the advantage of exempting chosen souls from vulgar pursuits, souls destined to the special

mission of teaching religion and morals. Men do not place high value on that which is on their own level. In order to embue them with high moral, religious, and even political (in the best sense of that term) action, it must not too closely resemble them. That cruel fate, which condemns to isolation the man devoted to the cultivation of an idea, betrays, at a very early period, a certain embarrassment which makes him appear awkward, out of place, tiresome in the midst of others. One sees that he lives on a high plane, and that he has difficulty in letting himself down; he is not skilled in common-places; his reserve excites in ordinary persons a sentiment of respect mixed with a certain antipathy. In epochs when it was believed that creeds were the most becoming occupation for cultivated minds, the religious life was an excellent asylum for such souls. A person who exchanged the religious life for that of the secular told me that the first thing which struck him was the meeting outside the walls of the cloister, not only a much greater number of lofty and serious souls than he could have imagined, but also that he was surprised to find the world in general so commonplace and preoccupied with household cares and a multitude of things which were not ennobling. I have no desire to exaggerate the importance of that species of spiritual gentility, without which one can very well be a very useful citizen, and even a respectable man. But it is certain that in abolishing the institutions of monastic life the human mind has lost a great school of originality. The distinction can be equally acquired by the practice of an intellectual aristocracy, and by solitude. Now, everything which has contributed to maintain in human nature a tradition of moral nobility is worthy of respect, and, in a sense, of regrets, notwithstanding that that result has been purchased at the cost of much abuse and prejudices,

## FRANCIS OF ASSISI.

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THE work of M. Karl Hase, entitled *Franz Von Assisi* (Leipzig, 1856), is a little masterpiece of religious criticism. M. Hase's manner of treating ecclesiastical history is peculiar to himself. A Professor of Theology and Member of the Upper Council of the Saxon Church, imbued, at the same time, with a liberal mind, and persuaded that God does not regard either forms or symbols, but only man's heart, he has invented terms of expression at once models of discretion, acuteness and reserve, in order to describe important religious facts which are outside the scope of all prejudiced *confessional*. If in some portions of his numerous writings, and especially in his "History of the Church," that somewhat feigned moderation which he assumes, and that tone at once ironical and caressing, betray a certain obscurity and far-fetched allusions, and an appearance of saying only half what he means, which may be regarded as insidious and contorted, such faults, in his life of Francis de Assisi, are hardly perceptible. In the present instance, one has nothing but praise to bestow upon the justness and soundness of his judgment, upon the precision of his style, and the profound grasp of his knowledge. It is fortunate that this excellent work has found a translator worthy of the subject. M. Charles Berthoud, in this little volume, has given evidence of a perfect acquaintance with religious history, and great aptitude for learned researches. It is not a complete translation that he

gives us. Though the ideas of M. Hase are throughout religiously adhered to, yet, in following a usage that seems to be prevalent in our times in translating German works, and which, on my part, I regret, M. Berthoud has revised certain chapters and cut out a portion of the notes. Still, such as it is, the charming opuscle of M. Berthoud is certainly the best work that can be consulted in our language in regard to the life of him whom one of his disciples has denominated the "patriarch of mendicants."<sup>1</sup>

Francis of Assisi possesses for religious criticism an interest beyond expression. After Jesus, no other man has been endowed with a clearer conscience, more absolute ingenuousness, a more lively sentiment of his filial relation to the heavenly Father. God was in very truth his beginning and his end. In him, Adam appeared to be without sin. His life is a fever of delicious madness, a perpetual intoxication of divine love. For an entire week he lived on the chirp of a grasshopper. His eye, clear and deep as that of a child, has seen the hidden secrets, those things which God has concealed from the wise, and revealed to babes. Now, this prodigy of holiness, this miracle of gentleness and of simplicity in a man who had an enormous public reputation, who was always in evidence, and who proved himself to be a great man of action and a powerful originator—that miracle, I repeat, we can study now very closely.

Centuries like ours, which have little virtue to boast of, are essentially sceptical. Measuring everyone by themselves, they proclaim that the great

<sup>1</sup> "*François d'Assise, étude historique après le docteur Karl Hase, professeur à l'Université d'Jena, par M. Charles Berthoud,*" Paris, Levy, 1864, petit in 8°. The work of M. Frederick Morin, *St Francis d'Assisi and the Franciscans* (Paris, Hachette, 1858), has been very well treated. But Francis is in some portions represented there as too much of a skilful organiser, almost as an accomplished politician.



ideal figures of the past are impossible and chimerical. In order to please certain minds, it would be necessary to construct a history which did not admit that any single man had been great. If you were to present to them a picture which rose above the level of the mediocrity to which they are accustomed, they would accuse you of introducing legend into history. They believe that all men have been as base and selfish as themselves. Now, here we have one of the richest and most perfect of legends. Francis of Assisi floats before our eyes in a light as ethereal as Jesus and Sakya-Mouni. Nevertheless, we have proof that (bating some miraculous circumstances) the real character of Francis of Assisi exactly corresponds to the portrait which remains of him. Francis of Assisi has always been one of the strongest reasons which has made me believe that Jesus was nearly all that the synoptic gospels have painted him to be. Some recent examples would lead us to conceive great originators to be selfish men, egotists, men puffed up with self-importance, wholly preoccupied with themselves and their mission, and sacrificing everything to these. It is no doubt true that the man who, in our time, would attempt even a part of that which Francis of Assisi accomplished, would be quickly vilified. But let us never make use of our leaden age as a historic measure when great things are to be judged of. Francis enjoyed the most extraordinary popularity without any sacrifice of *amour propre*, without sacrificing any of his natural simplicity. He was, in a sense, canonised by the people while still alive, and yet he always continued to be undefiled.

In fact, the life of Francis of Assisi, although enveloped in legend and impregnated with the supernatural, is not any the less well known to us. Some almost contemporaneous paintings have preserved his features to us: we see—as if he lived in our day



—that small, delicate Italian face, thin and pale, with its large beautiful eyes, its regular and finely-cut features, its almost imperceptible smile, its extreme mobility. The three legends of Francis of Assisi, compiled—one (that of Thomas de Celano) three years after his death; the second (that of the “Three Companions,” Leo, Rufinus, Angelus) seventeen years after that of Thomas de Celano: the third written by Saint Bonaventura, seventeen years later still—are three masterpieces of simple compilation, in which is clearly to be seen the part addressed to imagination, and that to historical truth. These great legends, at once ideal and true, were the especial gift of the Order of St Francis, or, if it be preferred, of the thirteenth century. The book, the “*Dits des quatre ancelles*,” or “The Life of Saint Elizabeth,” compiled from the writings of the four women who waited on her, is an admirable image, whose lucidity is unsurpassable. It is texts such as these which must be read to enable us to understand what legend is; how a narrative, anecdotal and fabulous in form, may be more true than the truth itself: how the glory of a legend belongs in a sense to the great man whose life that legend traces, and who has been able to inspire in his humble admirers qualities which, apart from him, they could certainly never have invented.

Let us hasten to say that it is not always thus. The personal characteristics of great founders are often transformed by their disciples. Sometimes legend creates a hero piecemeal, but more often the hero creates his own legend. In other words, there are legends which have neither biographies nor history (these two words must be limited to positive facts, into which nothing of the supernatural enters), yet are true portraits. In such a case, only a simple operation is needed to discover the truth: discard the marvellous, the concrete and the anecdotic turn which, materialising the idea, concentrates in a par-

ticular fact the general characteristics which, in the course of a life, have manifested themselves at intervals. Those who think that the fabulous character of a biography suffices to denude it of all historical value, ought also to maintain that Francis of Assisi never existed; that he is a myth created to express the ideal conceived of him by his disciples. It is undeniably the opposite of that opinion which is true. The Franciscan movement had its inception in the strong impression which Francis of Assisi made upon some disciples, who, though similar to himself, were yet much inferior to him. The legend of Saint Francis has the aspect which we recognise in it, because Saint Francis had really that personality, which had impressed its image upon the minds of his disciples. The beauty of the portrait belongs, moreover, to the original, and not to the genius of the artist who drew it.

For the rest, the cause of this notable exception is very simple. That which distinguishes Francis of Assisi in his age, and in all ages, is his perfect originality. He is a Christian, doubtless, and even a Christian most submissive to the Church: but his devotional genius belongs wholly to himself. It is probable that in France, or in good truth everywhere, except in that sweet and shaded Umbrian valley, he would have been reproached with heresy. He drew little from the Bible, which he read but seldom. He was neither scholastic, priest nor theologian. He was equally wholly detached from all the popular cults of the middle ages, in particular from that of the saints: and, without avowing it, he felt he was their equal. His true *origins* are: first, Umbria, "the seraphic province," that Galilee of Italy, at once fertile and wild, smiling and austere; next, by Provençal poetry. He loved the troubadours: he took them, in many respects, for his models. He prayed and praised in their language. From their

name (juleor) he called his disciples "Jongleurs de Dieu."

That which belongs to himself alone was his manner of *feeling*. Buddhism itself has nothing comparable to it. Francis is much the superior of the Buddhist "arhân." He has a zest for the real. He disdains nothing; he stands aloof from nothing; he loves everything; he has a smile and a tear for all; a flower puts him in ecstasies; he sees in nature only brothers and sisters. What revolts us in Oriental asceticism is the frightful *simplification* which it makes of life. I have seen one of these saints in an Egyptian village on the confines of the desert.<sup>1</sup> He had been there for twenty years, seated on the sand, plunged into lethargic gloom: no longer seeing anything, or hearing anything. His legs were as withered as the shanks of a skeleton. The sun, beating on his cranium, had taken all consciousness out of him: he existed even less than the reed or the palm-tree. By reason of creating a void about them, the Stylite and the Fakeer arrive at a state bordering on inanity. Francis of Assisi was the reverse of that. Everything had for him meaning and beauty. We all know that admirable canticle which he is said to have named the "Creatures' Song," and which, after the Gospels, is the finest specimen of religious poetry, the most perfect expression of modern religious sentiment.<sup>2</sup>

Most high, omnipotent and good Lord, to whom belongs praise, glory, honour and all blessing, everything proceeds from thee, and no one is worthy to speak thy name.

Let God my Lord be praised by all his creatures, and above all by *Messer Brother Sun*, who gives us the day and his light;

<sup>1</sup> Tel-el-Kebir, on the coast of the Isthmus of Suez.

<sup>2</sup> The authenticity of this *morceau* appears to be certain: but it must be remarked that we do not possess the original Italian. The text that we have is a translation from a Portuguese version, which again is a translation from the Spanish. The original version was put into verse by Friar Pacificus. The actual text now presented is not versified.

he is beautiful, radiating all with his great splendour, and presents to us an image of thee, O Lord.

Praised be my Lord for Sister Moon and for the Stars, which thou has created in the heavens, clear and beautiful.

Praised be my Lord for Brother Wind, for the air and the clouds, for the pure sky and for all time, which give life and sustenance to thy creatures.

Praised be my Lord for Sister Water, which is very useful, humble, precious and chaste.

Praised be my Lord for Brother Fire, by which thou lightest up the night; it is beautiful and pleasant, untameable and strong.

Praised be my Lord for our Mother Earth, which sustains and nourishes us, and which produces all manner of fruit, variegated flowers and herbs.

Praised be my Lord because of our Sister corporeal Death, from whom no living man can escape. Happy they who shall be found conformed to thy holy will, for the second death can do them no hurt.

There is in this none of the constraint affected by Port Royal, and the mystics of the French school of the seventeenth century, none of the exaggeration and frenzy affected by the Spanish mystics. Death, at the point which Francis of Assisi had reached, had no longer any meaning. In the whole of nature, he saw nothing which was inimical or too insignificant. He would take up the worms from the road to protect them from the feet of passers-by; he would exert his ingenuity to save a lamb from death or from the dangerous company of goats and bucks: he would conspire the escape of an animal caught in a gin, and would kindly warn it against allowing itself to be again trapped. He loved even the purity of a drop of water, and was careful that it should not again be rumpled and soiled. He possessed, stronger than any man, that great trait which is peculiar to minds devoid of vulgar pedantry—a love for and sympathy with animals. Far removed from the ferocity of the false Cartesian spiritualism, he acknowledged only one form of life; he recognised degrees in the scale of beings, but no pronounced

ruptures: he would not admit, any more than the East Indian, that false classification which places man on one side, and in a solid mass on the other those thousand forms of life whose exterior we only see, and in which the distracted eye sees only uniformity, but which may conceal infinite diversity. For Francis himself, he could only hear one voice in nature. One day, as he was returning to the hermitage of Alverno, a great flock of birds was twittering near his cell. "See, my brother," said he, "how our sisters seem to rejoice at our home-coming." Later, on the point of death, Saint Bonaventura admiringly relates that the larks, those friends of the light, circled joyously round the roof which was already wrapped in the shades of evening.

His perfect goodness renders these artless miracles credible. He had attained to the supreme indulgence, the perpetual joy of the great artist, who of all beings is the nearest to God. An imitator of the celestial Father, who makes his light to rise upon the righteous and the unrighteous, or of the sun who each morning regards with an equal smile the human swarms getting up to go each where his desire leads him, he does not believe in evil, he does not admit its existence. It is not that he was indifferent, but, penetrating to the innermost recesses of the heart, he could find there no unpardonable sin save meanness. Avarice, the narrow sentiment of the father of a family who thinks more of his children than his soul, is the only vice against which he shows himself severe. Weakness and error hardly seem to him to be a wrong. He would that people should receive brigands well, that people should lodge them, for he was persuaded that it was hunger which had led them into committing evil actions. To one who had just been despoiled, and who was blaspheming, he offered him all that he possessed, if he would cease to curse Providence. We must say that, like the heavenly



Father, he seemed sometimes to have a secret sympathy with sinners; certain weaknesses seemed to him marks of goodness; certain backslidings the exuberance of strong natures. We all know the story of the wolf of Gubbio. Francis having stipulated that it should have a daily allowance, the wolf, abundantly nourished from house to house, henceforward renounced its murderous habits, for which M. Hase, not without reason, casts reproach upon the paternal processes of the ancient pontifical government, which bestowed pensions on brigands in order to convert them.

It may be said that Francis of Assisi, since Jesus, has been the only perfect Christian. What makes him thus stand out is that, with a faith and love which knew no bounds, he undertook the accomplishment of the Galilean programme. His first rule was none other than the Sermon on the Mount, as it stood, without either explanations or attenuations. Francis had no desire to be made the head of any particular order; his whole desire was to practise evangelical morality, to realise primitive Christian perfection. The thesis of the book of the "Conformities," is the true one. Francis was in very truth a second Christ, or, rather, a perfect mirror of Christ. The fundamental idea of the Gospel is the vanity of worldly cares, which turns man away from the joys of the kingdom of God. This is likewise the essential principle of Francis of Assisi. The bird appeared to him, like as unto Jesus, to lead a perfect life; for the bird had no storehouse, it sang unceasingly; every hour it existed on the bounty of God, and it wanted for nothing. Dante, whose sentiment is in many respects more Umbrian than Tuscan, has said in admirable verse, "Widow of her first husband, Poverty, that spouse to whom as unto death no one willingly opens the door, had remained despised and neglected for eleven hundred years,

when this one, in presence of the heavenly Father and the celestial court, took her for his bride, and each day loved her more." Our century, the essential feature of which is to judge things, not by their æsthetic or moral side, but by their material disadvantages, no longer understands this absolute idealism. It makes the pretence of doing great things, apart from moral grandeur. Its inexperience in history, its assumption that it has to inaugurate a new moral era, inspire in it an exaggerated confidence in wealth. Now, here was a poor man, the son of a tradesman of Assisi, a kind of fool, by turns beggar, cook and vagabond, who accomplished that which our great men of action and our capitalists will never be capable of, a work enduring for seven or eight centuries, and embracing certain principles true for all eternity.

## II.

The principal idea of Francis of Assisi, the idea that to possess is a wrong, that it is more noble to be poor than to be rich, that mendicity is a good thing as well as a virtue, requires to be closely examined. First, it must be remarked that Francis, though he forbids possession, does on no account forbid enjoyment. Now there are cases where enjoyment supposes possession, while there are others where enjoyment excludes possession, the choicest things being by their nature indivisible. What are the things which afford to man the most lively pleasures? They are precisely those which do not belong to anybody, such as national glory, past grandeur, masterpieces of poetry, religious symbolisms, the sea, uncultured plains, the forest, the desert, the snowy summits of mountains. There is no poetry in Beauce or Normandy. A country cut up by boundary walls, intersected with neatly-made roads, where one enjoys

nature in one's own garden, is far from being poetic. At first glance, it seems that the dream of Francis of Assisi was to put an end to all art, to all noble life. And yet how strange that this sordid mendicant should be the father of Italian art! Ciambue and Giotto discovered their true genius in endeavouring to paint his legend upon his tomb. Art, that refined aristocrat, obstinately refuses its exclusive services to the rich; it works either for princes or the poor. Wealthy England, with her millions, will never have an art truly worthy of the name. Art is the child of a lofty society, living for glory and for the ideal. It accommodates itself to municipal republics, to the princely life of an all but sovereign aristocracy, to the monastic life, because that life lends itself to broad dispositions (*distributions*), to large works in common. I can comprehend what kings, republics, princes, nobles, monks and the poor have done for civilisation; but I cannot conceive what a society founded upon the selfishness of individual possession can produce that is great. I fear that the final result of such societies can be but deplorable mediocrity.

Certainly, if I were to maintain that the ideas of Francis of Assisi were the remedy for this evil of our day, I might justly be accused of paradox. The theory of the excellence and the nobleness of almsgiving will not find in our day many partisans. We must acknowledge, however, that the antipathy of the Franciscan school to wealth and economy rested in many respects on exaggeration. To possess is not an evil. It is nevertheless true that the acquisition of wealth implies a certain imperfection. For, all said and done, if the man who has become rich had been less eager on gain, less preoccupied by his business, more alive to his spiritual needs; if he had done more alms, if he had had more of that *laissez aller* which is the mark of a lofty soul, he would have been less rich. A man makes a fortune because

of his imperfections: to become rich a man must rigorously insist upon his rights, carefully guard his money, over-reach others (*en tirer parti*), fight at law—all of which things, though not in themselves an evil, are yet not of the best, nor the objects of lofty minds. Where a man puts his treasure, there he puts his heart also. Property cramps the soul, robs it to a certain extent of its gaiety: the bird is more agile than the snail which drags its shell behind it.

But there is another phase of Franciscan ideas which I find more true still: it is the loudly extolled principle that one does not pay for the things of the soul. There is between these things and any conceivable price such a disproportion, that the purchase money, in such a case, can never be regarded but as alms. The Church, with her exquisite tact in things spiritual, perceived this. She does not admit that she ever can be repaid. She proclaims herself poor, although in fact she is rich; because, if she were given the whole world, she would still aver that it was not enough. Men devoted to noble professions will never be brought to admit that they are paid. In my childhood I heard it related that in the time of the Corsairs the Breton sailors returned home from their daring expeditions laden with gold. But these proud natures, having a horror of gain which had transformed them into mercenaries, invented a singular pastime. They put their gold pieces in the fire until they were red hot, then threw them into the street, and were amused at the efforts made by the riff-raff to pick them up. Having the glory, they considered it unworthy of them to profit by it, and abandoned the latter to inferior natures, which it suited.

For us, whose lot it is to drag out our lives in the mud of a submerged Atlantis, these grand dreams of a vanished heaven are a profound, true, and an

eternal consolation. Let us figure to ourselves this first chapter of the Order, those five thousand mendicants encamped under huts made of straw or of branches from the trees, at the foot of the mountain of Assisi, and the amazed bystanders exclaiming,—“Yes, this is in very truth the camp of God!” Or better still, the distribution of the great indulgence of the Portiuncula. From the first stroke of the vesper bell of the first of August until the vesper on the day following, the multitude, stifled by the burning heat of the sun, rushed forward in order to cross the little chapel to obtain the *full pardon*. “Good people that you are,” the Dominicans would say, “why do you expose yourself to this great heat, to these fatigues? The indulgence promised you is not so great as you are told, besides, the Minorites are not able to share the *diplôme*” (*the pope’s licence*). This was true; the pope had never given any written authority to Francis. “Christ,” the holy man would say, “is my advocate, and the angels are my witnesses!” On one occasion an old woman died. She appeared to the pilgrims and said to them,—“By virtue of this indulgence, I entered straight into Heaven.”

From this Franciscan legend we can see that its beauty consists in its having emanated entirely, without ecclesiastical intervention, from the popular conscience. It is the glory of Italy that its people are at once the masters of an elegant speech and of a refined taste; the possessors of an exquisite tact, the inspirers, the collaborators and the appreciators of things beautiful. Next to Christianity, the Franciscan movement is the greatest popular movement which is recorded by history. We trace in it the simplicity of men who knew nothing apart from nature, and what they had seen or heard in the Church, then mixed all together in the most inconsiderate manner. One feels one’s self removed a



thousand miles from scholasticism. Francis of Assisi is almost the only man in the Middle Ages who was completely exempt from that leprosy, who was not tainted with the false mental discipline which the subtleties of the school had introduced. He had no other theological instruction than that of a humble believer. His preaching was peculiar. He preached from the abundance of his heart. If it happened that words failed him, he would bless the people and dismiss them. One day, however, when he was to preach before Pope Honorius and his cardinals, he carefully studied his discourse, and committed it to heart. He had hardly commenced when his memory failed him. Thereupon he put aside the prepared sermon, and betook himself to improvisation, and found words much more rapturous. He cast his feet and hands about as though he were going to fly; but the idea never occurred to anyone to turn this into ridicule, although his friend Cardinal Ostia was filled with anxiety, and was silently praying that the artlessness of such a man would not bring him into contempt.

A thorough Italian, he possessed a species of intuitive ability, a something which, without effort, ensures success in the most difficult enterprises. It is matter for wonder that he did not break a score of times with the narrow orthodoxy of his time. His gentleness served to disarm everyone. But then, given a certain degree of holiness, heresy becomes impossible; because, again, given a certain moral elevation, dogma has no existence: there is no room for disputation. His relations with Innocent III. are presented in various lights by his biographers, but all of them do honour to his judgment. Similar attempts to his, that of the "Pauvres de Lyons," for example, had been ruthlessly suppressed. Religious mendicity, exterior austerity, were qualities which, calling to mind the Cathari, excited the keenest sus-

pitions of the high church party. Marvels of honest simplicity were requisite in order not to go to destruction against that rock. As for the mighty of the world, Francis never knew them. His policy was artless in the extreme. He dreamt sometimes of visiting the Emperor. "I should ask him," said he, "both for the love of God, and for love of me, to publish an edict adhibiting anyone from taking my sisters the larks, and from doing them any injury, and ordaining that, on the holy Christmas night, he who had an ox or an ass should take most particular care of it, and that during this feast the poor be abundantly fed from the table of the rich."

With him everything took a poetic or concrete form. He lived in the state of mind in which the primary images that serve as the basis of language and mythology are created. One winter night, one of his disciples saw him enter the garden and make human figures in the snow, saying to himself: "See! this big one is thy wife; these two are thy sons; these two there are thy daughters, and those other two thy man-servant and thy maid-servant. Make haste to clothe them, for they are dying of cold. But if that is too much trouble for thee, content thyself with serving the Lord." Remember that all this is eight or ten thousand years old. With him every idea was materialised into a little drama; everyone of his sensations assumed a corporeal form, himself a sort of outward plastic realisation.

The people who pressed around him were similar to himself, slightly *irregular*, with very little theology. They were composed of mendicants, quondam poets, women, converted brigands, and outcasts of every description. They were all of a jovial disposition; the scene was sometimes one of wild, exuberant gaiety, a very carnival of holiness. Francis's principles were such as would not permit of severe discrimination in the choice of his subjects. He was too

good to be suspicious, and to have what is called a knowledge of men. He received thieves and honest folks with an equal welcome. In general, the thieves, touched by this welcome, became his saints, though, in some cases, their natural propensities returned. This great founder often entrusted "suspected persons" with his confidence. We all know the history of that Friar Elias of Cortona, who was his intimate friend and his immediate successor. He was an intriguer, who, before and after the death of the saint, played a most equivocal part. Francis esteemed him, for no other reason than that he was so little like himself. Elias was a consummate politician and a skilful administrator. The good, holy man, seduced by qualities which he himself did not possess, made him his right arm, and his last blessing was delivered upon the head of an impostor, who deviated in the strangest manner possible from the seraphic work. True it is that without him it is open to question whether the work could have succeeded. It was Friar Elias who brought down the too lofty ideal of the founder to the limits of the possible, and accommodated it to human weaknesses. The capital rule written by Francis's own hand, and which it was believed he had received upon the mountain as a revelation, established absolute poverty. This was not agreeable to Brother Elias. He destroyed the manuscript, of which he was the guardian, and pretended to have mislaid it by mistake. He represented that phase of charlatanism without which (such is the weakness of men) it would appear that no great popular movement can succeed. M. Hase thinks, and I am at one with him in his opinion, that the stigmata of Saint Francis, those stigmata which appeared as his just title to an exceptional place in the Christian heaven, were the invention of Friar Elias.

The discussion touching the miracle of the stig-

mata is perhaps the most interesting portion of the work of M. Hase. This miracle, besides that it is the greatest in the history of the Church of the Middle Ages, is likewise remarkable in that it is attested by witnesses all of which are contemporaneous. Not only do Thomas de Celano, the "three companions," and Saint Bonaventura speak of it (with important variations, no doubt), not only is it mentioned in passages of authors, strangers to the Order, passages of unquestionable authenticity, and posterior by only five or six years to the death of the saint, but we have also a document which is decisive. Elias, who, during the last six months of Francis, held almost in tutelage the mendicant saint, and never quitted him an instant; this Elias, in whose arms he expired, and who, from the moment that the last breath had gone out of him, governed the Order in his stead; this Elias, I repeat, almost in presence of the corpse, wrote a circular letter to announce to the brethren in France the death of the patriarch. In this letter, the original of which was found in the convent of Valenciennes, and of which Wadding had produced an exact copy, Elias speaks of the "new miracle which was manifested on the body of the saint a short time before his death," and describes that miracle in a manner conformably to other texts, although rather more timidly. It is, consequently, impossible to think here of a legendary elaboration, of a tardily invented rumour with the object of conforming the life of Francis of Assisi to that of his divine model. No; on the very day of the death of Saint Francis, the stigmata are mentioned. There is nothing to prove that they had been mentioned before, so that we are almost forcibly led to the conclusion, either that Friar Elias invented the thing, thinking that the rumour would not reach Assisi until the body should be placed out of sight, or that he himself imprinted the sacred marks upon

the body, the disposition of which latter he had during a whole night.<sup>1</sup>

This second hypothesis is highly probable. The body, in fact, was seen at Assisi by thousands of persons in the hours immediately succeeding death; for years the body continued to be the chief object of interest to Umbria, to the popes, and to the whole of Christendom. It was indeed dangerous to found such a belief upon a fact, the absurdity of which could have been proved. It is undoubted that the inhumation of the body was strangely precipitate. The saint died on Saturday evening, and on Sunday morning he was carried first to the monastery of Santa Clara, then to the cathedral of Assisi. Contrary to the Italian custom, the shell was closed; it was necessary to open it that Clara and her virgins might kiss the hand of the patriarch through the little window by which the nuns are given the holy sacrament. There is a still stranger fact. From the time of the removal of the body, which took place on Holy Saturday in the year 1239, to the definitive sepulture, that is to say, to the grand basilica at Assisi, built expressly for the purpose within the three years and a half immediately succeeding the demise, we discover again the hand of Elias. That artful personage seems to have taken precautions against anyone viewing the body. The multitude was eager to know, at any cost, whether the corpse, as was said, really preserved its life-like appearance; it desired even more eagerly to touch the stigmata. On this being refused, a frightful tumult ensued, for which Elias was held responsible. It has always been a tradition in the Order that Elias took possession of the body, and secretly interred it in a place in the Church which was to

<sup>1</sup> Doubts arose as early as the thirteenth century; "*an pia fuisset illusio sive suorum fratrum simulata intentio.*" These words occur in the "Legende Dorée" of Jacques de Voragine.



be known only to the General. This prompt and mysterious disappearance induces the belief that there was some powerful motive for concealing the corpse of the saint from the regards of men. What seems most probable is that the body did indeed bear marks, in which, with a little credulity, it was possible to see the sacred stigmata, but which it was not desirable to expose to a searching examination.

Many circumstances confirm this supposition. A few days before his death the saint was subjected to cauterisation. It was then that he exclaimed: "My brother fire, the Lord has made thee beautiful and useful; be gentle to me in this hour." It is not impossible that these traces of the cauterisations, found by Elias upon the corpse, may not have suggested the idea of the fraud, and have spared him the trouble of imprinting them with his own hands. If it be true that the Church of the Portiuncula possesses the heart of the saint, the wound in the side finds also a most natural explanation by the operation which, according to this hypothesis, was performed after death.

One ought to read in M. Hase's work the narrative of the imposing legends which have never ceased to issue from that strange tomb. Underneath the two superimposed basilicas, Umbrian imagination has erected a third, higher, and much more beautiful. There, in his doubly subterranean church, Francis, alone with some lighted wax tapers, awaits the Day of Judgment: living he stands upon the altar of marble without having felt corruption, his hands crossed, his five wounds dripping with blood. With his eyes raised to heaven he prays for men. A few privileged ones, being engaged in prayer in the lower church, and warned by earthquakes, saw the ground open of its own accord, and were thus enabled to descend. The wildest stories were spread around. Under pain of excommunication, Paul V. prohibited anyone from searching for the holy tomb. In 1818,

that marvellous legend was exploded. Under the authority of Pius VII., the General of the Franciscans caused excavations to be made: the pretence was made that the skeleton of Francis was discovered in a stone coffin under the high altar. The splendid ideal cathedral was then smashed like a pane of glass, and a miserable little subterranean chapel, in the very worst style, has replaced it.

Who is there that will give us one day a complete account of the first century of Franciscan history? There never was a popular revolution which has been subjected to more regular laws. One should see after the death of this saint, his thoughts rent asunder, if I may say so, by two contending parties; the one faithful to the ideal of the master, eager to regenerate the world through poverty, culminating in 1254 in the audacious attempt of the "Eternal Gospel," and whose principal representatives are John of Parma, Pierre-Jean de Olive, Ubertain de Casas, Fra Dolcino, and Michel de Césène; the other more terrestrial, more governable, and more speedily dominated and enlisted by the court of Rome. Two things would thus appear to have sprung from Francis; first, a religious Order, which has done more evil than good; in the second place, a ferment of liberty and of popular initiative, whence has proceeded the majority of the innovators of the second half of the Middle Ages. In many respects that exalted Franciscan school was one of the forerunners of the Reformation. Friar Elias, Michel de Césène, Marsile of Padua pursued in many cases the policy of John Huss and Martin Luther. Like them, they invited the German princes to reform the corrupted Church, and appealed to civil society against the papacy and the episcopate.

But the exposition of these ideas would carry us much too far. Let us thank M. Berthoud for his charming little volume, which entirely disposes of

the *Pater Seraphicus*, and let us hope that he will fulfil the promise which he makes in his preface of giving us likewise in French the work of M. Hase on Saint Catherine of Siena. The religious history of the Middle Ages, the original documents pertaining to which have long since been worked up, will gain by such labours what hitherto it has indeed lacked—just criticism and enlightened appreciation.

## JOACHIM DI FLOR AND THE ETERNAL GOSPEL.

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THE fundamental idea of nascent Christianity was faith in the near inauguration of a kingdom of God, which should renew the world, and found therein the eternal felicity of saints. Jesus repeatedly declared that those whom he taught would not taste of death until they had witnessed his advent. The whole of the first Christian generation lived in the belief that at any moment they might see appear in the heavens the great sign which was to announce the coming of the Son of Man. The author of the Apocalypse, more audacious, even essayed to calculate the days. But, seeing that the world wagged on, complaisant explanations afforded a back-door to these too precise prophecies, and the leaven of infinite hopes which lay at the heart of the new religion did not in consequence perish. A family of uninterrupted enthusiasts, in one sense most sincere disciples of Jesus, was continued from century to century, who kept announcing the near fulfilment of the promised ideal. This powerful instinct as to the future has been the mainstay of Christianity, the secret of its perennial youth. What are the congregations of "The Latter-Day Saints," who still keep multiplying in England and the United States, if they are not, in their way, the remnant of the old spirit, the direct fruit of

the Apocalypse, a party of belated millenarians, cherishing, in the full day of the nineteenth century, the hopes which were the consolation of the first believers?

But of all the Utopias which have emanated from these aspirations towards a new state of mankind, expecting to realise what until then had only been figure and prophecy, the most original undoubtedly was the attempt of the religious and monastic sect which, at the commencement of the thirteenth century, essayed to reform the Church and the world, and boldly inscribed upon its standard, *The Eternal Gospel*. The ill success of this attempt, and the severities it was subjected to, destroyed the monuments by which it might have been directly made known to us. It requires now the most minute enquiries to discover a trace of these daring innovations, and in the study upon which we are about to enter, we shall often be compelled to have recourse to methods admitted in the publications of the learned. But the subject we are about to investigate is the most extraordinary, perhaps, in the most important epoch of the Middle Ages. Nothing, therefore, ought to be regarded as chimerical or puerile when the matter in hand is that of reviving the memory of those who loved humanity, and suffered in the belief of serving her.

## I.

### JOACHIM DI FLOR.

A name which is half legendary shines out at the head of *The Eternal Gospel*. Towards the end of the twelfth century, and in the first years of the thirteenth, there lived in Calabria a holy Abbot of



the Cistercian order, named Joachim.<sup>1</sup> Located on the confines of the Greek and Latin Churches, he discerned with rare foresight the general state of Christianity. The whole Latin world acknowledged him as a prophet—a new order, that of Flor, adopted his name, taking it from the place, in the vicinity of Cosenza, whither he had retreated. The narrow and suspicious scholastic theology which was soon to parch all the healthy germs which the century carried in its bosom, was not yet dominant. The doctrine of Joachim was never assailed during his lifetime. On the contrary, it was much esteemed by Popes Lucius III. and Clement III. It was generally held that, in order to be able to explain the obscure oracles in the holy books, he had received supernatural light and special assistance.

Endowed with an ardent imagination, the Calabrian enthusiast, in his frequent intercourse with the Greek Church, the scrupulous guardian of ancient discipline, and, perhaps, with some branch of the Catharist Church, conceived a great aversion to the organisation of the Latin Church, the intrusion of feudalism into sacred things, and to the corrupt and worldly manners of the simoniacal high clergy. The idea which, three centuries later, led to a religious revolution, I mean, the profound difference between the Church of the Middle Ages and the primitive Church, he already entirely possessed. The Bible, and above all the Prophets, which he read constantly, revealed to him a historic philosophy, which he applied without compunction to the present, by which even he pretended to sway the future. The destiny of the Catholic Church, such as it had attained in the course of centuries, appeared to him to be nearing its end. The Greek Church, he sometimes said, is Sodom, the

<sup>1</sup> See his life in *The Bollandists*, Acta S. S. Maii, vol. vii. page 93, *et seq.*

Latin Church, Gomorrah.<sup>1</sup> He seemed to believe that the doctrine of Christ was not definitive, and that the reign of the Holy Spirit obscurely hinted at in the Gospel had not yet been established.

Such thoughts occurred spontaneously in countries the most diverse, to souls which felt the throes of the times. The courageous heretics, disciples of Amauri de Bene, who were burned at Champeaux, in December 1210, professed exactly the same ideas,<sup>2</sup> and there is absolutely nothing to induce the belief that they were in the least acquainted with the doctrines of Joachim.

Joachim di Flor seems to have already dreamt of poverty as a remedy for the corruption of the age. We are assured that he predicted the appearance of an order composed of spiritual men, which should dominate the earth from sea to sea, and enjoy the vision of the Father; but Joachim only foresaw what Francis d'Assisi was to realise twenty years later. His order of Flor never acquired any very great importance, while the grave doubts which weighed upon his orthodoxy after his death, prevented the spread of the belief in his sanctity in a definitive manner, beyond the borders of Calabria. The personality of that strange man, surrounded with a halo of mystery, was, however, deeply imprinted in the memory of his contemporaries. Hence, it was not long before legend claimed him. Innumerable miracles were attributed to him; he was made to predict revolutions in the Church and in empires. Imagination could now no longer be restrained. Dante formally accorded him a prophet's brevet.<sup>3</sup> Even now the numerous manuscripts which contain

<sup>1</sup> Epistle *Loquens Dominus Ezechieli*, No. 58 of Saint Germain, last leaf, back.

<sup>2</sup> See the Memoir of M. Hauréau in the *Revue Archéologique*, December 1864, Fleury, Book lxxvi. No. 59.

<sup>3</sup> Paradiso, xii. 140-141.

the prophecies ascribed to Joachim present a curious spectacle. We see that they have been read with faith and anxiety. The margins are burdened with notes: *Nota, nota, nota! Nota bene! Nota mirabilem prophetiam!* At the bottom of the pages there are figures and calculations: the anxious readers attempted to support their terror, and to see whether the redoubtable events announced in the book were soon to be fulfilled.<sup>1</sup>

It is usual to represent Joachim as the author of *The Eternal Gospel*. The Middle Ages, from the thirteenth century, universally believed, as well as modern critics, that the words *Eternal Gospel* were the title of a secret book, the doctrines of which it was wickedly attempted to substitute for the Gospel of Christ. Doubts arise on this point, insomuch that we see the majority of contemporary authors speak only of such a book vaguely, from hearsay, and without ever citing it textually; the more so, when there are to be observed flagrant contradictions upon the nature and origin of the book in their testimony. When we see this undiscoverable volume serve as the aliment of and a pretext for the passions and interests which embroiled the world of the thirteenth century, we are sometimes tempted to place it in the same category as the book of the *Three Impostors*, which, it is very certain, never existed,<sup>2</sup> ranking it as one of those chimeras invented by calumny, and always held in reserve against those it was worth while to ruin. Indeed, the words *Eternal Gospel*, as designating the name of a school, appeared for the first time in the theological world in 1254. This was the time when the quarrels of the University with the mendicant orders, and of the mendicant

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, the manuscripts of the old Latin collection, No. 427.

<sup>2</sup> See my Essay on *Averroës and Averroïsism*, p. 292, *et seq.* (Second Edition).

orders among themselves, had reached their fever point. *The Eternal Gospel* became in that general mêlée a weapon for the different factions. The Dominicans reproached the Franciscans with it, and the latter the disciples of Saint Dominic. The University, at the instance of Guillaume de Saint Amour, attributed it to the mendicants, and by reason of a singular turning round of public opinion, Guillaume de Saint Amour himself passed as the author of it.<sup>1</sup>

In many respects we are better able to clear up the confusions than contemporaries. This is certain, *The Eternal Gospel* was neither the production of the Dominicans nor the University; it proceeded from that dissident faction of the family of Saint Francis, which, preserving in the midst of the general degeneracy of the order, the spirit of the founder, continued to believe that Seraphic Rule embraced the principle of a regeneration of humanity, a second gospel, superior to the first, both by reason of its perfection and the duration which was assured to it. As to this point, doubt is no longer possible, but as to everything else, what an uncertainty! Did a book entitled *The Eternal Gospel* ever really exist? If it did exist, who was the author of it? Has this book been preserved in whole or in part? Is there any hope of finding it again? Such are the questions I will attempt to answer by means of certain unpublished documents, from which criticism has not yet extracted all the information possible. At all events, seeing that the writings of Joachim have been made the pretext for and have furnished the matter of *The Eternal Gospel*, a critical examination of the works of Joachim ought to precede all investigation of the subject which now engages us. Such a work not hav-

<sup>1</sup>See the article of M. Daunou upon John of Parma, in vol. xx. of the *Literary History of France*, p. 23, *et seq.*, and the additions to the articles of Guillaume de Saint Amour and Gérard d'Abbeville, in vol. xxi. p. 448, *et seq.*

ing found a place in any collection of either literary or ecclesiastical history, I feel myself constrained to undertake it.

## II.

### DISCUSSION AS TO THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE WORKS OF JOACHIM DI FLOR.

In a letter in the form of a will, dated in the year 1200,<sup>1</sup> Joachim, setting forth in detail the state in which he then found his writings, mentions three works as completed: *The Concordance of the Old and New Testaments*, *The Commentary upon the Apocalypse*, and *The Decachord Psalter*—"without mentioning," adds he, "a few opuscles against the Jews and the adversaries of the Catholic Faith."

These three writings are the only great works attributed to Joachim, the authenticity of which can be firmly established. According to the most probable opinion, Joachim died on the 30th March 1202; at all events, he died soon after 1200. It cannot then be admitted that in the last two or three years of his life he composed the other works ascribed to him, and which, by themselves alone, form a more voluminous collection than the books whose compilation occupied the whole of his life. Luke, afterwards Archbishop of Cosenza, who was his secretary, does not mention the three works named above.<sup>2</sup> Guillaume de Saint Amour, in exposing his

<sup>1</sup> It may be read at the head of the editions of the *Concordance of the Old and New Testaments* (Venice, 1519), and of *The Commentary on the Apocalypse* (Venice, 1527), or in D'Argentré's *Collectio Judicorum*, i. p. 121, or in the Bollandists, loc. cit. p. 104. M. Preger thinks this letter was fabricated about the middle of the thirteenth century, together with Joachim's apocryphal writings. But the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) had it before them (Labbe, *Conc.*, part i. col. 145).

<sup>2</sup> Acta S. S. ; loc. cit., p. 93.



errors, does not refer to any others.<sup>1</sup> The cardinals who condemned his doctrines at Anagni cite only one letter besides these three works. Florent,<sup>2</sup> Bishop of Saint-Jean-d'Acres, who discharged the functions of promoter in this matter, alleges only the three great works. Guillaume d'Auvergne mentions only the *Commentary on the Apocalypse* and the *Concordance*.<sup>3</sup> Finally, we shall soon show that the other books which have been added to the works of the holy Abbot have all the intrinsic characteristics of being supposititious.

The three great authentic works of which we speak were several times printed, and are to be found in a great number of manuscripts. We need not hence describe them. It is only important to observe that these editions were prepared in a very negligent manner, and that there may have slipped into the text comments and additions which did not belong to Joachim. It has likewise to be remarked that the six books of *The Commentary on the Apocalypse* were preceded by a *Liber Introductorius in Expositionem Apocalypsis*, which is often presented as a separate work under the title of *Enchiridion*, or *Apocolypsis Nova*.<sup>4</sup>

The treatise against the Jews, of which Joachim makes mention in his will, appears to be found in a Dresden manuscript,<sup>5</sup> and to be connected with *The Concordance*.

To the authentic works of Joachim, however, it would seem that we must add two letters:—

<sup>1</sup> In Martène and Durand, *Amplissima Collectio*, vol. ix. col. 1323. See *Hist. litt. de la Fr.*, vol. xxi. p. 474.

<sup>2</sup> See hereafter, p. 156, *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> *De Virtutibus*, c. xi. p. 152. (Paris, 1674.)

<sup>4</sup> Sorbonne MS., No. 1726, fol. 92 back, lines 27, 28; fol. 103, lines 2 and 3. This same work in No. 427 of the old Latin collection is called—I do not know why—*Liber de Diversitate Mysteriorum Dei*. See De Visch's *Bibl. Cisterc.*, p. 172.

<sup>5</sup> *Katalog der Handschriften der Bibl. zu Dresden*, vol. i. p. 57. De Visch, *Bibl. Cisterciensis*, p. 172. Trithème, No. 389.

(1.) An unpublished letter addressed to all the faithful, and commencing with these words,—*Loquens Dominus Ezechieli Prophetæ*: it is to be found in the manuscripts 3595 of the old collection, fol. 19, at the back; Saint Germain, 58, last page, at the back; Sorbonne, 1726, fol. 59.

(2.) A letter *De Articulis Fidei, ad Quemdam Filium suum Joannem*, identical with a treatise *De Articulis Fidei*, is mentioned in the earliest lists of the writings<sup>1</sup> of Joachim. This work is known only through the extract which is to be found in the verbal reports of the commission of Anagni which condemned *The Eternal Gospel* in 1255, of which reports we shall speak<sup>2</sup> presently. Joachim recommends his disciple to keep the book carefully concealed, so as to avoid the suspicions of false zealots who seek only pretexts for spreading scandal. We can hence perceive that the esoteric and secret character which Joachim was anxious to give to that writing prevented the multiplication of copies. It was in this writing, perhaps, that he maintained those doctrines respecting the Trinity, which were opposed to those of Peter Lombard, and drew down upon him the condemna-

<sup>1</sup> *Joachim Abbatis et Florentis ordinis Chronologia* (Cosenza, 1612), p. 92. *Acta S. S. Maii*, vol. vii. pp. 103, 105. The Bollandists give us very unlikely suggestions concerning this work.

<sup>2</sup> It reads thus:—(Sorbonne MS., 1725, fol. 104.) “*Idem habetur apertius in libello ipsius Joachim, ‘De articulis fidei,’ descripto ad quemdam filium suum Johannem, quod opus suspectum est ex ipso prologo, ubi sic incipit dicens: ‘Rogasti me attentius, fili Johannes, ut tibi compilatos traderem articulos fidei, et notarem illa quæ occurrerent Scripturarum loca, in quibus solent simplices frequenter errare. Ecce in subjecta pagina invenies quod petisti. Tene apud te, et lege sub silentio, observans ne perveniat ad manus eorum qui rapiunt verba de convallibus, et currunt cum clamore, ut vocentur abhominibus Rabbi, habentes quidem speciem pietatis, virtutem autem ejus penitus abnegantes.’ Ecce qualiter in hoc prologo vult iste Joachim articulos fidei legi in abscondito, more hæreticorum qui in conventiculis dogmatizant. Item inhibet ne tractatus suus veniat ad manus magistrorum, quos etiam tam impudenter quam superbe vituperat.*”

tion of the Fourth Lateran Council.<sup>1</sup> The reports of Anagni, again, contain two fragments of the two works, the one extracted from the first chapter, entitled, *De Fide Trinitatis*, the other from the last, entitled, *Confessio Fidei Ejus, id est Joachim* (fol. 185); but these extracts contain only theological quibbles, possessing but a mediocre interest for the critic.

We ought, perhaps, also to regard as belonging to Joachim two hymns upon Paradise, the one in sapphic, the other in trochaic verse, which are to be found in the editions of his works subsequent to *The Decachord Psalter*. The second of these compositions, being the recital of a journey in the supernatural world, is curious, seeing that it preceded *The Divine Comedy*.<sup>2</sup>

Let us now enter upon the discussion of the works which have been ascribed to Joachim, and which criticism may or should combat.<sup>3</sup>

The next in importance is *The Commentary on Jeremiah*,<sup>4</sup> presumably dedicated to the emperor,

<sup>1</sup> The Council appears to refer to a separate treatise, "Libellum sive Tractatum quem Abbas Joachim editit contra Magistrum Petrum Lombardum, de unitate seu essentia Trinitatis." Labbe *Conc.*, vol. xi. pt. 1, pp. 143, et seq. 240; *D'Argentré Coll. Jud. I.* pp. 120, 121. Vide De Visch, *Bibl. Cisterc.*, p. 173; Trithème, *De Script Eccl.*, No. 389; De Lauro in *De Riso*, pp. 150, 151.

<sup>2</sup> Neither M. Ozanam nor Labitte nor Mr Thos. Wright, I believe, mention this Hymn in their works on the origin of Dante's trilogy.

<sup>3</sup> De Lauro, Trithème, and De Visch make some remarks, but they are too indefinite to discuss.

<sup>4</sup> There appeared subsequently to the primary composition of this work, in the *Zeitschrift für Wissenschaftliche Theologie*, of M. Hilgenfeld (2d year, Jena, 1859) a memoir of M. Karl Friedrich, relating to that Commentary, and *The Commentary on Isaiah*, also attributed to Joachim. As regards the question of authenticity, M. Friderich has arrived at the same conclusion as us. M. Völter accepts that thesis as proved.—*Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* of Brieger (4th year, Gotha, 1880), p. 367, et seq. Without being acquainted with either M. Friderich's researches or mine, M. J. A. Schneider attained a like result (*Joachim von Flor*, p. 27, et seq.)

Henry VI., and printed several times at Venice. The character of this writing is very different from that of the authenticated works of Joachim. When Joachim would be prophetic, he is so in a sober and reserved manner. He mentions no one by name: events are hardly even indicated: the indefiniteness of the Biblical style permits him to make use of those vague phrases which become prophetic when events fit in with them, and do not compromise when the facts take an opposite turn. *The Commentary on Jeremiah*, on the contrary, is precise in the extreme. The allusions in it to the events of the thirteenth century are indubitable. Frederick II., who was only two years old at the time when Joachim must have written this work, is already designated in it by the metaphors usual to his enemies,—*vipera, regulus*. His reign is represented as that of a tyrant inimical to the Church, destroyer of its privileges, persecutor of its ministers, a new Evilmerodach, who is seated in the Temple and has himself worshipped like a God.

“In his infancy,” says the prophet, “he shall appear meek and gentle, he shall be suckled at the breasts of the Spouse of the Lamb; but, in course of time, like another Belshazzar, shall follow the impulse of his passions, and with women shall profane the sacred vessels of the Temple of God. But, if you ask me, what shall be the end, listen to Isaiah, who will instruct you. A sword not human shall overwhelm him. A sword, which is none other than the power of the word of God, shall exterminate him, so that you may know that God does not require the hands of men to drag that monster from his lair.”

The Guelph of the thirteenth century betrays himself in these curious words:—

“The Lord shall unsheath his sword, for the rule of the Germans has ever been harsh and cruel to us. It must needs, then, that the Lord shall destroy him with the rage of his fury, so that all kings shall tremble at the noise of his fall.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fol. 46 and 62 (Venice, 1525). This edition appears to be curtailed in some passages. The text cited by Don Gervaise (*Histoire de L'Abbé Joachim*, p. 35, *et seq.*) is more complete.

And in another place :—

“The army of the Chaldeans fighting against Jerusalem and Judah, with the exception of Lachis and Azecha, represents the Germans and other persecutors armed against the Roman Church and the Latin cities of Italy, with the exception of those who are strong in their numbers, or who know how to arrange themselves behind their walls.<sup>1</sup> The schism between the Church and the empire, commenced by the Normans, shall be consummated by the Germans, whose fleets shall submerge the liberty of the Pontiffs, in such a manner that the empire which served at first to raise the Church shall, in its last days, work its ruin.”<sup>2</sup>

“The rule of the Chaldeans,” says he again, “tends to annihilation. The eagle shall become, as says the Erythræan Sybil, a leopard in its ferocity, a fox in its cunning, a lion by its terror. Under the pretext of repressing the Patarins, he will treacherously march against the Church, and, in spite of the resistance of Italy, in spite of the anathemas of the Church, he shall satisfy his rage. How many will be the evils that shall then fall upon Liguria and Italy? It will be much easier to feel than to describe them. Under the combined efforts of the Germans and the French, all the Roman nobility shall perish; the Pontiff shall be banished, the monasteries overthrown, the Christian religion effaced from the earth.”

France excites no less the apprehensions of the ultramontane prophet :—

“Let the Church be on her guard! The alliance of France is a reed which pierces the hand of him who leans on it.”<sup>3</sup>

The persons most disposed to acknowledge the gift of prophecy in Joachim will no doubt find it difficult to admit that he could have entered to such an extent into the passions of a century, the first years of which he had only seen. Another and last proof will suffice, if it stand in need of it, to demonstrate our thesis. The work in question was dedicated to

<sup>1</sup> “Exceptis illis quæ vel fortes populariter sunt, vel quæ esse appetunt in suis munitionibus singulares.”

<sup>2</sup> Fol. 58, back, compare 53, back.

<sup>3</sup> Videat generalis ecclesia si non fiet ei baculus arundineus potentia gallicana, cui siquidem si quis nititur perforat manum suam. Cf. Isaiah xxvi. 6. Vide the Chronicle *De Rebus in Italia Gestis*, published by M. Huillard-Bréholles, p. 257; cf. *ibid.* p. xxxvi.



Henry VI., who died in 1197. It must consequently have been composed before that date; still, in the list of his works, which was prepared in 1200, Joachim makes no mention of *The Commentary on Jeremiah*.

*The Commentary on Jeremiah* ought certainly to be regarded as a production of the school which sprang from the order of Saint Francis, who, as we shall soon see, sought, about the middle of the thirteenth century, to avail himself of the name of Joachim in order to ensure the triumph of his doctrines. The ideas of Franciscan Joachimites are to be found on every page. The year 1200, conformably to the theories of that school, is given as the termination of the great affliction which shall close the reign of Christ, and open that of the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup> Allusions to the two great mendicant orders, the future institution of which, it is averred, Joachim had predicted, frequently recur. Nay, as though the party which attributed its opinions to Joachim was fearful that thoughts expressed in so enigmatical a manner might not sufficiently attain the end proposed, some adepts of the party took care to explain the obscure passages in an opusculè which has been preserved to us, in No. 836 of Saint Germain, under this title: *Verba Quaedam de Dictis Joachim Abbatis Explanativa super Jeremiam*. In this, each anathema is distinctly distinguished, and each menace applied to a proper name.

Our argument shall have been proved to demonstration when it is seen what an important place the apocryphal productions of Joachim held in the school of *The Eternal Gospel*. The recently published<sup>2</sup> "Chronicle" of Fra Salimbene, a Franciscan of the thirteenth century, furnishes us with important light on the subject. In it the commentary of Joachim on Jeremiah is frequently cited. The first knowledge

<sup>1</sup> Fol. 45, back, 58, back, 62.

<sup>2</sup> Parma, 1857.

that Salimbene had of it was in 1248.<sup>1</sup> The irreconcilable feud between Frederick II., and the Italian and Pontifical party, beginning about 1239, the date of the compilation of *The Commentary on Jeremiah*, is thus fixed within sufficiently narrow limits.<sup>2</sup> Commentaries on Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the minor prophets were printed several times at Venice, and are to be found in several manuscripts.<sup>3</sup> These works are open to the same objections as *The Commentary on Jeremiah*. It is not to be credited that Joachim could have composed so many works in the space of two or three years. Moreover, anachronisms and traces of conjecture are frequently to be found in them.

The *De Oneribus Provinciarum*, presented as a distinct work in No. 836 of Saint Germain and in some others,<sup>4</sup> is an extract from *The Commentary on Isaiah*. The author groups into provinces all the cities of the world that are known to him by name, and addresses to each of them a word of prophecy. Independently of the interest which such a work possesses in respect of geography, we find in it a great amount of historical information on the affairs of the first half of the thirteenth century. The author is carried away by the same preoccupations as the commentator on Jeremiah. Animosity to the house of Hohenstaufen manifests itself everywhere. Sicily is the furnace of tyranny and error (*alumpna tyrann-*

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 102, 122, 176, 389.

<sup>2</sup> The movement of Hall in Suabia (Fleury, lxxxiii. 3), and the *Epistola Fratris Arnoldi, Ordinis Prædicatorum, de Correctione Ecclesiæ*, published by Winkelmann (Berlin, 1865), present the German, Ghibelline, and Dominican counterpart of the same movement. Vide M. Völter's Memoir in the *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* of Brieger, vol. iv. 1880, p. 360, *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> Vide C. de Visch, *Bibl. Cisterc.*, pp. 172, 173; *Bollandists, Acta, S. S. Maii*, vol. vii. pp. 103, 105; Fabricius, *Bibl. Med. et Inf. Latin.*, vol. iv. pp. 40, 41; *Lectionum Memorabilium et Reconditarum Centenarii XVI.*, vol. i. p. 488, *et seq.*

<sup>4</sup> *De Visch*, p. 173; *De Riso*, pp. 122, 153, though wrongly, admits it as such.

*nidis et erroris*). Calabria is the cavern of worms, the hole of vipers.<sup>1</sup> Umbria and Spain shall see arise, like two stars, two orders clothed in sackcloth and haircloth, destined to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom. The devil will raise up against them a ferocious beast, to wit, the sect of the Patarins.<sup>2</sup>

We must refer to the same category the Commentaries attributed to Joachim on the prophecies of Merlin and the Erythræn Sybil, likewise dedicated to Henry VI.<sup>3</sup> They can be read in No. 3319 of the old collections, and in part in No. 865 of Saint Victor.<sup>4</sup> These texts, anything but uniform, are cut up according to the caprice of the different compilers, and it is difficult to fix their identity. Thus No. 3319 contains two continuous different versions of the commentary in question. Moreover, it is remarkable that Merlin and the Erythræn Sybil are frequently cited in *The Commentary on Jeremiah*. Here again, Franciscan ideas shine out every moment. Fra Salimbene knew the whole of these apocryphal prophecies, and contrasts them with *The Commentary on Jeremiah*.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fol. 83, back, 84.

<sup>2</sup> Fol. 80. v. I will now adduce some other passages about the Patarins: "Hæresis Patarena in Lombardia terminis invalescens adeo suos circumquaque stimulos pravitatis extendit ut non minus sit infesta Catholicis quam olim prophetis Domini fuit Athalia filia Jezabelis, etc. . . . Lombardorum gens impia . . . Deo detestabilis . . . quia quæ de fumo putei, doctrina scilicet seculari, hæreticos imbuit et aerem ecclesiasticæ puritatis infecit, æternæ rhomphæam ultionis necesse est ut non evadat . . . Verona nutrix hæresis dirum deflebit excidium filiorum. (Fol. 81, back, 82.) "Ut si campus tribulis et urticis, scilicet Patarensis, Gazaris et aliis schismaticis in Tholosa, Livonia (*sic*) et Ausonia, et Liguria diversisque partibus per Italiam occupetur, quum de fumo erroris eorum partes etiam remotissimæ denigrantur. (Fol. 93, back.)

<sup>3</sup> *De Visch*, pp. 172, 173; *De Lauro*, in *De Riso*, p. 151.

<sup>4</sup> Perchance in the Joachimite MS. of St Omer. See supplement to the catalogue of that library, by M. Théodore Duchet. *Revue Critique*, Nov. 15, 1873, pp. 323, 324.

<sup>5</sup> Pp. 175 176; Cf. p. 106, *et seq.*

The *De Oneribus Prophetarum* is a commentary supposed to be addressed to Henry VI. on certain chapters of Nahum, Habakkuk, Zachariah, and Malachi. It is to be found in the manuscripts 3595 of the old collections, 836 of Saint Germain, and 865 of Saint Victor (incomplete) and in the manuscript 278 of Saint Omer.<sup>1</sup> It was printed at Venice in 1519. It is evident that the intention of the forgers, in dedicating these apocryphal pieces to Henry VI., was to give them a greater appearance of authenticity. It may be added that the dedicatory epistles are so indecorous, and so full of brutal menaces, that the tone alone would suffice to demonstrate their falsity.

In Nos. 58 of Saint Germain (the last page but one), and 3595 of the old collections, fol. 22, are to be found, subjoined to other works of Joachim, an opuscle, without either title or the name of the author, in the form of a synoptic table, and commencing with these words: *Helyas jam venit, et non cognoverunt eum*. It is an *exposé* of the whole of Joachim's philosophy of history, symbolically connected with the opening of the seven seals of the Apocalypse.

Fra Salimbene cites it under the title of *Book of Images*.<sup>2</sup> There, the end of the New Testament is fixed in the year 1260. Then shall appear Elias, while the Roman Church, which shall have been destroyed by the emperor, shall be re-established. The last pope named in this opuscle is Innocent III., who reigned from 1198 to 1216. The author does not seem to employ any other artifice to have it believed that he is Joachim. Fra Salimbene declares he received at Hyères, from Hugues de Digne, the great Joachimite, and copied at Aix, for John of Parma, a commentary of Joachim on the four Gospels.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *De Visch*, p. 173; Duchet, loc. cit.

<sup>3</sup> Pp. 85, 124, 224.

<sup>2</sup> Compare Salimbene, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Pp. 124, 125.

This work exists in a Dresden manuscript.<sup>1</sup> It is undoubtedly a supposititious writing. Ch. D. Visch<sup>2</sup> refers to the existence of a work of Joachim, entitled *De Seminibus Scripturarum*, in a Cistercian convent, near Saragossa. The learned M. Théodore Duchet found that work in No. 278 of the Saint Omer library.<sup>3</sup> The real title is *De Semine Scripturarum*. I would recommend some young investigator to examine that writing, and to ascertain what is its character and the degree of its authenticity.

The manuscript of Saragossa contained, it seems, a Joachimite commentary on *The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, which only became known to the Latins through the translation of Robert of Lincoln, made about 1242. The important Dresden manuscript, A. 121, contains (p. 235, *et seq.*) two other Joachimite opuscles,<sup>4</sup> a minute examination of which might also be of moment. The *Criticism on the Prophecies of Cyrillus*, printed at Venice in 1517, and of which several copies are in existence, is evidently an apocryphal work also. The prophecies on the popes, attributed to Joachim, which enjoyed in the Middle Ages such great popularity, deserve even less to be discussed. The rôle of prophet being once assigned to the Abbot of Flor, his name was used as a shelter, behind which ranged themselves those whose enthusiasm and policy engaged them to foretell the future. A uniform sentiment seems to inspire the authors of these singular compositions, and imparts a great unity to the apocryphal works of Joachim, to wit: hatred of the Court of Rome, which is identified

<sup>1</sup> *Katalog der Handschr. der Bibl. zu Dresden*, i. p. 57 (Leipz., 1882); De Visch, *Bibl. Cisterc.*, p. 172; Trithème, No. 389; *De Lauro in De Riso*, p. 151. The *De Septem Sigillis* (De Visch and Trithème, *loc. cit.*) seems to be an extract from it. (*Katalog, loc. cit.*)

<sup>2</sup> *Op. Cit.*, p. 173.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide Revue Critique*, Nov. 15, 1873, p. 323.

<sup>4</sup> *Katalog der Handschr. der Bibl. zu Dresden*, i. p. 57.



with the *Courtisane* of the Apocalypse; hatred of the pope, who is identified with the Antichrist; hatred of the emperor, who is represented as the oppressor of Italy. All of them betray the hand of a sect, dominated by the idea of thorough reform and of declared revolt against the Church. For our present purpose, it is sufficient for us to have established that the responsibility for these bizarre productions cannot be traced up to the Abbot of Flor, and to have proved that three great works, namely, *The Concordance of the Old and New Testaments*, *The Exposition of the Apocalypse*, *The Decachord Psalter*, and some letters or fragments of secondary importance, deserve only to bear the name of Joachim.

### III.

#### THE EXALTED FRANCISCAN SCHOOL—JOHN OF PARMA.

The discussion of the writings of the Calabrian prophet, which we have just submitted, should suffice to prove that none of the authentic or apocryphal works to which his name is attached bear the title of *Eternal Gospel*. Although scholars such as Tillemont, Crevier, and several others have supposed that Joachim wrote a work so named, yet we shall presently demonstrate that that proceeds from some confusion. It appears even that at no time did Joachim very clearly avow the seditious ideas with which he was subsequently charged. The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) in unanimously condemning the opposition that he raised against Peter Lombard in regard to a point in metaphysics, acknowledge, at the same time, his submission to the Church and his perfect docility.

Joachim might never have acquired the reputation of being more than a second-rate theologian

and a bold exegete, if an unexpected piece of good luck had not rescued his name from oblivion, and associated it with one of the most daring tentatives, the particulars of which have been handed down to us in the history of Christian reformers.

We have not yet had pointed out to us by anyone the complete historical significance of the order of Saint Francis. On the one hand, the monastic institution which has monopolised the attention of the historians of religious orders, and, on the other, the incomparable poetic outburst which has particularly engaged men of taste and imagination, have prevented the social and political aspirations which were concealed under this apparently purely ascetic movement from being appreciated at their true value. The fact is, that from the very beginning of Christianity people never once dared to conceive such hopes. The book of the *Conformities*, by Bartholomew of Pisa, is only an isolated work: it is the tardy manifesto of the secret thoughts of the Order. The aim of Saint Francis was not to add a new rule to the already long list of monastic rules; his aim was to realise the Christian ideal by showing what could be achieved by literally accepting the Sermon on the Mount as a law of life. At the bottom of the Franciscan tentative, there was the hope of a general reformation of the world, a restoration of the Gospel. It was admitted that, for twelve hundred years, the Gospel had not been much acted upon; that the essential precept of Jesus, the renunciation of worldly goods, had not been understood; that, after centuries of widowhood, Poverty had at length found a spouse.<sup>1</sup> What was this but to avow that the birth of Francis of Assisi was the beginning of a new era for Christianity and humanity.<sup>2</sup> These audacious pretensions, subordinated in

<sup>1</sup> Dante, *Paradiso*, xi. 58, *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> *Vide Fioretti*, chap. xvi., towards the end.

the founder by great mystical tenderness, and often by exquisite tact, unveiled themselves only by degrees; but the idea that holiness consisted entirely in the renunciation of property was bound to bear its fruit. When it was maintained that man had a right to seek for a more exalted perfection than that whose secret is possessed by the Church, was not this the same as saying that the Church was coming to an end, so as to make room for the society which should teach that new perfection? Even during the life of the founder, and in particular at the first Chapter held after his death, two parties were discernible in the Order. The one, incapable of sustaining the superhuman enterprise of which the mendicant founder had dreamed, and wiser according to the flesh than the spirit of the seraphic institute would allow, believed that the primitive rigour of the rule was beyond the power of man, that this rule admitted of modification, and that the pope could dispense with it. The other, with surprising audacity, maintained that the work of Saint Francis had not yet borne all its fruit, that this work was superior to the pope and the Church of Rome, and that the rule was a revelation which depended on God alone. At the bottom of their hearts there was, without their avowing it, the belief that the appearance of Francis was neither more nor less than the advent of a second Christ, as great as the first—greater, even, on account of his poverty. Hence that strange legend in which the Seraph of Assisi, equal in everything to Christ, is placed above him, because he possessed nothing of his own, not even the things needful for use. Hence again that haughtily avowed pretension that the institute of Saint Francis was destined to absorb all the other orders, to supplant the universal Church itself, and to become the definitive form of human society on the eve of its dissolution.

These lofty ideas, restrained by the good sense as well as by the worldly enough spirit of the majority, were the secret of a select number when the election of John Borelli or Buralli to the dignity of General in 1247, twenty-one years after the death of the Patriarch of Assisi, led to an irruption, and gave a definite name to the new doctrine. John Buralli, born at Parma about 1209, was the most pronounced representative of the party which, anxious for the literal accomplishment of the Alvernian revelations, did not recoil before the most exaggerated social applications of the principle of poverty. He rejected all the interpretations of the rule, even those which had been proposed by doctors and sanctioned by popes. Persuaded that the institution of Saint Francis embraced the future of the Church and of the human species, he conceived the project of reviving the ideas of the founder, which the laxity of his disciples had allowed to fall into oblivion. The commencement of his *généralat* was a kind of return to the purest form of the Franciscan ideal. The rule was again put vigorously into force all round. There happened then to the Order of Assisi what happens to all religions in their origin. The real disciples of the founder—the saints, the ascetics—became soon an embarrassment. In the years following the death of Francis, the inheritors of his spirit were almost all exiled or imprisoned; one or two were even assassinated. John of Parma recalled the banished saints. The legend of Francis was taken up again and embellished.<sup>1</sup> Report said that a will, which insisted even more strictly upon the requirements of the rule, was supposed to be dictated by Francis when stigmatised. By his lofty piety, his contempt for earthly greatness, his aversion to the worldly

<sup>1</sup> The compilation of the narrative of the *Three Companions* dates from the year 1247.

glare of Ecclesiastical dignities, John of Parma appeared for some time to the zealots of the Order the living image of their sainted founder. The nine years that his *généralat* lasted were the reign of a pious coterie, which reign has been vividly depicted to us in the memoirs of one of the affiliated, the artless and amiable Fra Salimbene, which were long ago given to the public.<sup>1</sup> After Francis d'Assisi, Joachim was the recognised oracle of this small school. His writings were eagerly read and devoutly copied by the latter. The Abbot of Flor, who had left only in Calabria some obscure disciples, found thus, in another Order, a devoted family and ardent adherents.

There can be no doubt that we have here the origin of *The Eternal Gospel*. As early as the fourteenth century, Nicholas Eymeric, the Dominican, in his *Directorum Inquisitorum*, designates John of Parma as the author of the book in question, and this opinion has continued to be that of almost all Ecclesiastical critics and historians. The efforts put forth by Wadding and Sbaraglia, the authors of the literary history of the Franciscans, with a view to efface a blot of heresy from a superior of their Order, have not succeeded in obscuring a truth, the certainty of which goes even the length of demonstration.<sup>2</sup> There remains, nevertheless, a multitude of questions which have yet to be solved. Does the book of *The Eternal Gospel* exist in any collection of manuscripts? If so, what is its nature? What portions of the compilation are to be attributed respectively to the master and to his disciple, Gérard de Borgo San-Donnino, who, according to Fra Salimbene, was the sole author of the work? These are the questions upon which manuscript documents throw much light. We hope

<sup>1</sup> See in particular pp. 98, *et seq.*; 101, *et seq.*; 104, 317, *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* M. Daunou's article, previously quoted.



to show that the fragments of *The Eternal Gospel*, and the notes of the trial which was occasioned by it, have come down to us.

## IV.

ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS WHICH SERVE TO ELUCIDATE  
THE QUESTION OF THE ETERNAL GOSPEL.

These documents are preserved in two manuscripts from the library of the old Sorbonne, now the National Library (Sorbonne collection, No. 1726, fourteenth century; 1706, fifteenth century), and in a manuscript belonging formerly to the College of Navarre, now the Mazarine Library (No. 391, fifteenth century). These manuscripts have not altogether remained unknown to critics. The two learned Dominicans, Quétif and Echard, who applied themselves assiduously to making minute abstracts from the manuscripts of the Sorbonne, have cited a passage, incidentally, it is true, from No. 1726, in the article on Hugues de Saint-Cher.<sup>1</sup> M. Daunou knew of the fragment cited by Quétif and Echard, and made use of it in his excellent work on John of Parma; but he did not have recourse to the original manuscripts. M. Victor Le Clerc perceived immediately the importance of the documents contained in this manuscript, and the use to which they could be turned. No. 1706, although much less complete than No. 1726, was made use of by the Bishop of Tulle, Du Plessis d'Argentré, for his great compilation: *Collectio Judicorum de novis Erroribus* (tome 1st, Paris, 1724). M. Hauréau also applied himself to an examination of it. As to the actual manuscript deposited at the Mazarine Library, I am indebted to the learned M. Taranne for my knowledge of its existence, who, in view of a catalogue of the manuscripts of the

<sup>1</sup> *Script ord. Præd.*, vol. i. p. 202.

said library commenced by him, had described it.<sup>1</sup> The extracts relating to *The Eternal Gospel* contained in these three manuscripts are four in number:—

I.—In No. 1726 of the Sorbonne, and only in that manuscript,<sup>2</sup> is to be found a writing bearing this title, *Exceptiones librorum viri eruditissimi venerabilis Joachim, primi Florentium abbatis, de pressuris seculi et mundi fine et signis et terroribus et ærumnis, seuetiam de pseudo-Christis et pseudo-prophetis, quorum plura scripta sunt in divinis sermonibus, sed idcirco non omnibus clara, quæ multis sunt nodis perplexa et occultis mysteriis. Quæ omnia spiritualiter intellecta ostendunt nobis multa quæ futura sunt novissimis diebus, laboriosos scilicet rerum fines et, post multos et magnos agones et certamina, pacem victoribus impertiri.*

The work runs on thus for seventy-eight pages, and is abruptly brought to a close without either *explicit* or conclusion. It is an extract from the authentic or apocryphal works of Joachim, without

<sup>1</sup> Among the extracts from the MSS. of Rome, by La Porte du Theil, which are in the MS. department of the *Bibliothèque Nationale* (vol. vii. p. 323; vol. xviii. p. 56), is one which is supposed to come from No. 4380 of Queen Christina, headed "Articuli cujusdam libri, Parisiis combusti, qui dicebatur Evangelium sempiternum. Incipit: Sequuntur articuli quadraginta." I fear to identify this piece with certainty. I recommend it to young students of the *École de Rome*.

<sup>2</sup> The Sorbonne MS., 1726, is composed of a collection of fragments, each bearing a distinct pagination. The only part interesting to us comprises 106 pages. The last page bears the following notes in different handwritings.—"Errores qui continentur in Introductorio in Evangelium æternum, et in libro Concordiarum Joachim;" then: "In hoc volumine continentur extractiones librorum Joachim, et extractiones de Evangelio æterno et reprobationes eorundem. Quod volumen est pauperum magistrorum de Sorbona, ex legato magistri Petri de Lemovicis, quondam socii domus hujus. Pretii 20 solidorum, 39ns., inter originalia mixta sanctorum. Residuum require in papiro post librum de gradibus electorum. Chatenabitur."

any commentary by the compiler.<sup>1</sup> The intention which governed the composition of this collection is evident. The design was to compress within a small volume the complete doctrine of Abbot Joachim. We shall have to inquire whether the compilation contained in the manuscript in question can be identified with any of the writings which played a part in the affair of 1254.

II.—The second document which has been found in the three manuscripts cited is an extract from the condemned propositions discovered in the book entitled *Introductorium in Evangelium Æternum* by the commission of cardinals named by Pope Alexander IV., in 1255, to examine the said work. This document was published by Du Plessis d'Argentré from the manuscript, 1706, of the Sorbonne,<sup>2</sup> which is the least perfect of the three. In the edition of d'Argentré are several omissions which bear upon some important passages, particularly upon the very precise references which the pontifical censors

<sup>1</sup> There are seven works thus abridged:—

1. From fol. 1 to fol. 38, back, there are extracts from the book of the Concordance between the two Testaments.

2. From fol. 38, back to fol. 48, there are extracts from the *Liber Introductorius in Apocalypsim*, which, as we have already seen, serves as an introduction to the *Exposition of the Apocalypse*, by Joachim.

3. From fol. 48 to fol. 49, extracts from the *Psalterion Decachord*.

4. From fol. 49 to fol. 59, extracts from the *Commentary on Jeremiah*, attributed to Joachim.

5. From fol. 59 to fol. 63, back, Joachim's letter referred to above, and beginning with "Loquens Dominus Ezechieli." It is unfinished, and followed by a small French fragment in another handwriting, "C'est que l'en dit es profecies de Joachim escrit ou grant livre de Concordances an l'an de grace mil et cc. et iii<sup>xx</sup> et v. serunt bataillies es plains de Nerbonne de quatre rois esqueles morront," etc. A lacune then from fol. 65 to fol. 76, extracts from the *De Oneribus Prophetarum* attributed to Joachim.

7. From fol. 76 to fol. 78, back, extracts from the *Commentary on Ezeziel*, also attributed to Joachim.

<sup>2</sup> *Coll. Jud.*, i. p. 193, et seq.

made to the text of the *Introductorium*. We shall give, whenever it is necessary, the original text in notes,<sup>1</sup> in order to complete the text of d'Argentré. Accordingly, it behoves us to restore an important passage omitted by the learned bishop. Towards the end of the twelfth chapter we have these words: "Until that angel who had the sign of the living God,<sup>2</sup> and appeared about the year 1200 of the incarnation, an angel whom Friar Gérard recognised to be no other than Saint Francis."<sup>3</sup> This Gérard is assuredly Gérard de Borgo San-Donnino, to whom Salimbene ascribes the principal part in the affair of *The Eternal Gospel*.

III.—After this enumeration of errors in the Sorbonne manuscript, 1726 (fol. 91, v.), and in the Mazarine manuscript (fol. 86, v.), comes an extended *procès-verbal* of one of the sittings of the Anagni Commission. This fragment, not to be found in No. 1706, has escaped d'Argentré—the whole of it is unpublished:—

In the year of our Lord 1255, on the 8th of the ides of July, at Anagni, before us, Eudes, Bishop of Tusculum,<sup>4</sup> and Friar Hugues,<sup>5</sup> cardinal priest, commissioners named by the pope, together with Father Stephen,<sup>6</sup> Bishop of Præneste, who has

<sup>1</sup> This is the opening which has been abbreviated by D'Argentré: "Hæc notavimus et extraximus de *Introductorio in Evangelium Æeternum*, misso ad dominum papam ab episcopo Parisiensi, et tradito nobis tribus cardinalibus ad inspiciendum ab eodem domino papa, videlicet O. Tusculanensi, Stephano Prænestino episcopis, et Hugoni Sanctæ Sabinae presbytero cardinali."

<sup>2</sup> The Stigmata.

<sup>3</sup> Item in XII. capitulo, versus finem, ponit hæc verba: "Usque ad illum angelum qui habuit signum Dei vivi, qui apparuit circa MCC. incarnationis dominicæ, quem angelum frater Gerardus vocat et confitetur sanctum Franciscum."

<sup>4</sup> Eudes de Chateauroux, who plays an important part in the Life of St. Louis. Vide Fleury's *Histoire Ecclesiastique*, books lxxxii. No. 33; lxxxiii. No. 45; lxxxv. No. 7.

<sup>5</sup> This is the famous Hugues de Saint-Cher.

<sup>6</sup> He was a Hungarian and Archbishop of Stringonia. See Fleury's *Hist. Eccl.*, book lxxxv. No. 7.

excused himself through his chaplain, and remitted to us his powers in this affair, there appeared Master Florent, Bishop of Acre,<sup>1</sup> who submitted to us some passages extracted from the books of Joachim, which to him seemed suspicious. And in order to examine these passages, we associated with ourselves two other persons, namely, Friar Bonvalet, Bishop of . . .,<sup>2</sup> and Friar Peter, reader to the preachers of Anagni, one of whom scrutinised the original texts of Joachim di Flor, and verified in our presence whether the citations which the said Bishop of Acre read, or caused to be read, by our registrar, were actually found in the aforesaid books. He began thus:—

First, it is necessary to note the fundamental principle of the doctrine of Joachim. This consists in distinguishing three states in the history of the world. This he sets out in the fourth chapter of the Second book, which commences with these words: *Intelligentia vero illa*, saying: *Aliud tempus fuit in quo vivebant homines secundum carnem*, etc.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Florent or Florentin, Bishop of Acre, afterwards became Archbishop of Arles. In 1260, we shall find him again condemning the Joachimites at the Council of Arles. Cf. *Gallia Christiana*, vol. i. p. 569.

<sup>2</sup> The name of the Bishopric is doubtful. Can it be the *ecclesia Panidensis* of the *Oriens Christianus*, iii. col. 966-7?

<sup>3</sup> “Anno Domini M<sup>o</sup>CC<sup>o</sup>LV<sup>o</sup>VIII., idus Julii, Anagninæ coram nobis, Odone episcopo Tusculano, et fratre Hugone presbytero cardinali, auditoribus et inspectoribus datis a papa, una cum reverendo patre Stephano Prænestino episcopo, se excusante per proprium capellanum suum, et nobis quantum et hoc vices suas committente, comparuit magister Florentius episcopus Acconensis, proponens quædam verba de libris Joachim extracta, suspecta sibi, ut dicebat, nec publice dogmatizanda aut prædicanda, nec in scriptis redigenda, ut fieret inde doctrina sive liber, pro ut sibi videbatur. Et ad hæc audienda et inspicienda vocavimus una nobiscum duos alios, scilicet fratrem. Bonevaletum, episcopum Pavensensem, et fratrem Petrum, lectorum fratrum prædicatorum Anagninæ, quorum unus tenebat originalia Joachim de Florensi monasterio, et inspiciebat coram nobis utrum hæc essent in prædictis libris quæ prædictus episcopus Acconensis legebat et legi faciebat per tabellionem nostrum, et incipiebat sic:

“Primo notandum est fundamentum doctrinæ Joachim. Et proposuit tres status totius Seculi IIII, capitulo secundi libri, quod incipit: *Intelligentia vero illa*, etc., dicens: ‘Aliud tempus fuit in quo vivebant homines secundum carnem, hoc est usque ad carnem, cui initiatio facta est in Adam.’” This passage really occurs in the *Concordance*, p. 8, Venice Edition, 1519.



What follows is principally composed of a series of passages extracted from the authentic works of Joachim, that is to say, from the *Concordance* of the *Apocalypsis Nova*, or *Liber Introductorius in Apocalypsim*, and from *The Decachord Psalter*, with a criticism of the erroneous propositions which are therein to be met. Again and again we find citations from a commentator on Joachim, named Brother Gerardus,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I here quote the chief passages concerning this important personage.

Fol. 94 of the MS. 1726, "Quod exponens frater G. scripsit. 'Hæc abominatio erit pseudopapa, ut habitur alibi.' Et istud 'alibi' reperitur longe infra, v. libro Concordiæ de Zacharia propheta, ubi dicitur: 'In Evangelio dicitur: Quum videritis abominationem desolationis quæ dicta est a Daniele,'" etc. . . . Rursus et ibi frater G. "Hæc abominatio quidam papa erit simoniaca labe respersus, qui circa finem sexti temporis obtinebit in sede, sicut scribit in quodam libello ille qui fuit minister hujus operis."

Fol. 96, back, after an extract from the *Commentary of the Apocalypse*, "Hucusque verba Joachim et fratris Gerardi."

Fol. 99. "Item habitur per notulam fratris Gerardi super principium ejusdem capituli Danielis, ubi dicit sic frater Gerardus: 'Hæc tribulatio, quæ erit talis qualis nunquam fuit, debet fieri, ut ex multis locis apparet tam in hoc libro quam in aliis, circa M.CC.LX. annum incarnationis dominicæ; post quam revelabitur Antichristus. Hæc tribulatio erit in corporalibus et spiritualibus maxime. Sed tribulatio maxima quæ statim sequetur interposito tamen cujusdem spatii quantulæ cumque pacis, erit magis in spiritualibus; unde erit periculosior quam prima.'"

Fol. 100, back, "Super hoc Gerardus in glossa: in hoc mysterio vocat terram scripturam prioris Testamenti, aquam scripturam novi Testamenti, ignem vero scripturam Evangelii æterni."

*Ibid.* "Super hoc glossa fratris Gerardi: 'Declaratio est ejus quod dicitur. Evangelium æternum in secundo libro Psalterii decem chordarum, scilicet xix. capitulo, quod incipit: *In primo sane tempore.*'"

Fol. 102. "Notula fratris Gerardi: 'In hoc loco vir indutus lineis, qui fuit minister hujus operis, loquitur de se et de duobus qui secuti sunt eum statim post M.CC<sup>um</sup>. annum incarnationis dominicæ; quos Daniel dicit se vidisse super ripam fluminis; quorum unus dicitur in Apocalypse Angelus habens falcem acutam et alius dicitur Angelus qui habuit signum Dei vivi, per quem Deus renovavit apostolicam vitam.' Idem ibidem, super illud

who is no other than Gérard de Borgo San-Donnino, whose name we have already found in the second document above mentioned. Later on, we will draw conclusions from all this.

IV.—The fourth document is only to be found in No. 1706 of the Sorbonne. D'Argentré has published it from this manuscript, together with some errors and omissions.<sup>1</sup> M. Preger has published it from two Munich manuscripts.<sup>2</sup> It is a new enumeration of the errors contained in *The Eternal Gospel*, errors identical with those which are attributed by Nicholas Eymeric to John of Parma;<sup>3</sup> but Nicholas Eymeric contents himself with announcing the errors without saying whence they are extracted, whilst our manuscript furnishes on this point important indications. Usserius and Meyenberg<sup>4</sup> have reproduced from the chronicle of Henry of Hereford a text similar to that of our manuscript, much less correct in general, but more complete towards the end. In fact, instead of being satisfied, like the text of d'Argentré, with the errors drawn from the fourth book of the second part, the text of Meyenberg, agreeing with that of Preger, distinguishes two treatises in the fourth book,<sup>5</sup> points out the errors of verbum *Evangelium Regni*, dicit similiter Gerardus in notula: 'Evangelium regni vocat Evangelium spirituale, quod beatus Joachim vocat Evangelium æternum, quod in adventu Helyæ prædicari oportet omnibus gentibus, et tunc veniet consummatio!' "

Fol. 102, back. "Dicit frater Gerardus in notula, 'Iste doctor sive angelus apparuit circa M.CC annum incarnationis dominicæ, hoc est ille liber de quo loquitur hic, in quo vii. tonitrua locuta sunt voces suas, quæ sunt mysteria vii. signaculorum.' "

<sup>1</sup> *Coll. Jud.* 1 d. 164, *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> *Abhandlungen* of the Munich Academy, vol. xii. 3d part, p. 33 *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> *Direct-inq.*, pp. 188-89 (Romæ, 1578).

<sup>4</sup> "De pseudo Evangelio æterno" (præsiede J. A. Schmidt), p. 11, *et seq.* (Helmstadt, 1725).

<sup>5</sup> Instead of "De quarto libro hujus duo errores extrahi possunt" (D'Argentré), we must read, "De quarto libro hujus partis, in primo tractatu, duo errores extrahi possunt."

both, then passes on to the fifth book, and distinguishes there five treatises: one treatise—*De septem Diebus*; a second, *De Jobo*; a third, *De Joseph et pincerna cui somnium apparuit*; a fourth, *De tribus generibus hominum, videlicet Israeliticis, Ægyptiacis, Balyloniis*; a fifth, *De Historia Judith*. At the end, in the Munich manuscripts, we read this curious annotation: *Ex hiis autem quæ dicuntur ibi in expositione mystoriæ de David potest intelligi quod ille qui composuit opus quod dicitur Evangelium Æternum non fuit Joachim, sed aliquis vel aliqui moderni temporis quoniam facit ibi mentionem de Frederico imperatore, persecutore romanæ ecclesiæ.*<sup>1</sup>

## V.

## THE BOOK OF THE ETERNAL GOSPEL.

Having indicated the texts upon which it is my intention to base my arguments, it remains for me to draw the conclusions therefrom. What idea can we formulate of the book entitled *The Eternal Gospel*? Was this book distinct from the *Introduction to The Eternal Gospel*? Is this second book still in existence? Is the work of Gérard which is cited in the Anagni trial identical with the *Introduction to The Eternal Gospel*? In what relation did all these works stand to the actual books of Abbot Joachim? At what date were they composed? The embarrassment which some of these questions, in appearance so simple, presents, ought not to surprise us. There are no historical questions more difficult to solve than those in which it is sought to recover from the past some of the predicaments created by the modern spirit. Scruples as to an exact bibliography had but little existence in the Middle Ages. The strict individuality of a book is

<sup>1</sup> *Preger*, work quoted above, p. 36.

a recent idea. Printing itself, which was to work so profound a change in that respect, modified but slowly the habits of the public. The composition, as well as the form, of *The Eternal Gospel* is clearly revealed to us in the report of the cardinals of Anagni (the second of the documents above enumerated). It is there expressly stated<sup>1</sup> that *The Eternal Gospel* was divided into three parts, and was formed through the combination of the three authentic works of Abbot Joachim, namely, *The Concordance of the Old and New Testaments*, being the first book, *The New Apocalypse*, the second,<sup>2</sup> *The Decachord Psalter*, the third. The scraps which we possess of the notes of Gérard suggest the same thing. Gérard, indeed, had a habit of designating Joachim by these words: *Ille qui fuit minister hujus operis*. A curious marginal note in the Mazarine library manuscript, which belonged to the college of Navarre, is conceived in the same sense.<sup>3</sup> This note formally ascribes to Joachim a book entitled *Evangelium Æternum*, distinct from the *Introductorium in Evangelium Æternum*, and indicates its place in the library of the college of Navarre. Again, there are in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries some manuscripts in which the three writings of Joachim were amal-

<sup>1</sup> D'Argentré, p. 163. After hæc verba, we must add: "In primo libro Evangelii æterni, videlicet in secundo secundæ Concordiæ. Et tria prædicta probantur similiter expresse xxi. capitulo B, ubi distinguitur triplex littera. Ibi: 'Attendent vero,' etc. . . . et similiter ante finem ultimi capituli, ubi dicitur: 'Illud attendendum,'" etc.

<sup>2</sup> See above, pp. 129-30. It must be noticed that the work referred to here is not the complete commentary on the Apocalypse, but the preliminary book which Joachim wrote as an introduction to it.

<sup>3</sup> This is the note which corresponds with *Item quod per virum* in the second document: "Nota ista usque ad finem de erroribus contentis in libro abbatis Joachim quem vocavit de Evangelio æterno, qui liber est in pulpito affixi parieti."

This note is in 15th century handwriting.

gamated, and bore the common title of *Evangelium Æternum*.

Such manuscripts must have been one of the results of the movements of 1254, inasmuch as we have seen that Joachim himself never gives that title either to any one of his writings, or to the collection of his writings. I do not believe that there exists in any library to-day a manuscript thus entitled.

The fourth document, enumerated above, in spite of an apparent contradiction, confirms the result at which we have just arrived touching the composition of *The Eternal Gospel*, and proves that that was not merely the personal view of the Anagni commissioners. We find there, in fact, that *The Eternal Gospel*, properly so called, contained at least two parts. The first was called *Præparatorium in Evangelium Æternum*. The second was called *Concordia Novi et Veteris Testamenti*, or *Concordia Veritatis*, and was divided into five books. It is evident that the author of that document considered the *Introductorium*, or *Præparatorium in Evangelium Æternum*, which elsewhere is distinguished from *The Eternal Gospel*, as a first book of the *Eternal Gospel* itself. The *Concordance* is thus found to be no more than the second book. If there is here no question of *The Apocalypse* and *The Decachord Psalter*, it is undoubtedly on the ground either that those parts are regarded as less important, or because that they do not repeat the errors of the *Præparatorium* and the *Concordia*. What proves, however, the invincible truth of our hypothesis is this: First, That the errors given in the fourth document, as extracts from the first part of *The Eternal Gospel*, entitled *Præparatorium in Evangelium Æternum*, are identical with those we have found in the reports of the cardinals at Anagni as extracts from the *Introductorium in Evangelium Æternum*; Second, That the errors given by the fourth document, as extracts from the second part of *The*



*Eternal Gospel*, are indeed extracts from the book of the *Concordance* of Joachim, the order and the divisions of which are followed point by point. The difference here, however, is a mere difference of arrangement. We shall adopt the divisions followed by the Commission of Anagni as being the more preferable.

It is hence fully established that *The Eternal Gospel*, properly so called, was no other than the collection of the three principal writings of Joachim, and, consequently, that the *Introduction to The Eternal Gospel* was distinct from it, although it has sometimes been joined to it as a first book. This distinction is proved by the report of the Commission of Anagni. In fact, we see that they had in their hands a work entitled *Introductorium in Evangelium Æternum*, which had been addressed to the pope by the Bishop of Paris. We learn from it, besides, that this work was simply divided into chapters, and not into books. Finally, that it is from this work that the cardinals concluded that *The Eternal Gospel*, properly so called, was formed by the collection of the three works of Joachim. Here is a fresh proof making the same distinction. This Florent, Bishop of Acre, who performed the functions of promoter in the Commission of Anagni, and became subsequently Archbishop of Arles, presided about 1260 over a council, in which he condemned afresh the errors of Joachim. Now, it follows from the discourse he gave at this council, which he assembled at Anagni, that he was anxious to condemn the opuscles which had been circulated under the title of *The Gospel of the Holy Spirit*, and *The Eternal Gospel*, and not the actual works of Joachim, which until then had not been discussed, and been very little read.<sup>1</sup> Finally, Fra Salimbene calls the work of his

<sup>1</sup> Et licet nuper, præsentibus nobis et procurantibus, a sancta Dei sede apostolica damnata fuerit nova quædam, quæ ex his pullulaverat, doctrina venenata Evangelii Spiritus Sancti pervul-

friend Gérard "a little book," *libellum*.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, however, because of his anxiety to maintain the honour of his order in this whole affair, he omits to give us the exact title of the opusculum of Gérard.

The idea that we are brought to form from these accounts of *The Introduction to The Eternal Gospel* is that of a book in which it is designed to sum up the doctrine of Joachim, and to revive it for the furtherance of Franciscan ideas. However, the little precision which the Middle Ages carried into bibliography led to much misunderstanding on this point. In almost every case the name of *Eternal Gospel* was applied to the *Introduction*. We have just seen a proof of this in the words uttered by Archbishop Florent in the Council of Arles. Matthieu Paris and Guillaume de Saint-Amour produced the same confusion—the former when he said that the friars composed a book which commenced with these words: *Incipit Evangelium æternum*—a book which he calls, a little further on: *Novus ille liber quem Evangelium æternum nominant*;<sup>2</sup> the second, when he cites, as from *The Eternal Gospel*, some words which are not to be found, at least in the same sense, in the works of

gata nomine, ac si Christi Evangelium non æternum nec a Spiritu Sancto nominari debuisset; tanquam pestis hujusmodi fundamenta non discussa fuerint nec damnata, liber videlicet Concordantiarum et alii libri Joachitici, qui a majoribus nostri usque ad hæc tempora remanserunt intacti, ut pote latitantes apud quosdam religiosos in angulis et antris, doctoribus indiscussi; a quibus si ruminati fuissent nullatenus inter sacros alios et sanctorum codices mixti remansissent, quum alia modica Joachitica opuscula, quæ ad eorum pervenire notitiam, tam solemniter sint damnata," etc. (Labbe, *Conc.*, vol. xi. 2d part, col. 2361, 2362.) Would it not appear as if Florent had his eyes on a note in which the writings were classified just as in the note to be seen at the close of MS. 1726 from the Sorbonne collection, 9 2<sup>us</sup> *inter originalia mixta sanctorum*?

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 102, 233, 235, 236.

<sup>2</sup> P. 1254 (London edition 1571)

Joachim.<sup>1</sup> Nicholas Eymeric<sup>2</sup> quotes, as extracts from *The Eternal Gospel*, the errors which the Commission of Anagni discovered in the *Liber Introductorius*. Finally, the librarian of the House of Sorbonne, who, in the fourteenth century, added divers notes to the end of No. 1726, heedlessly produced the same confusion.

It must be avowed that the Anagni documents do not state as clearly as could be wished that Gérard was the author of *The Introduction to the Eternal Gospel*. The first Anagni document represents *The Introduction to the Eternal Gospel* as a book composed of a continuous text, and divided into chapters. In regard to this book, the cardinals do indeed cite an opinion of Friar Gérard, but without stating whether this note was to be found in the book itself, or whether Friar Gérard was the author of this work. Moreover, they say, vaguely, *Scriptor hujus operis*,<sup>3</sup> and they accuse him of representing himself as one of the twelve angels of Saint Francis, who was looked on as a second Christ.<sup>4</sup> The second Anagni docu-

<sup>1</sup> Scripta sunt tria ipsa verba *Mane Thecel Phares* in illo maledicto libro quem appellant Evangelium æternum, quod jam in ecclesia pro palatum est, propter quod timendum est de subversione ecclesiæ." De peric. noviss. temp. p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> *Directorium Inquisitorium*, p. 188 (Romæ, 1578).

<sup>3</sup> This passage is nearly entirely omitted by D'Argentré: "Item quod per virum indutum lineis intelligat Joachim scriptor hujusi operis probatur xxi. capitulo, circa medium, per verba de quinque intelligentiis generalibus et septem typicis, ubi sic ait: 'Vir indutus lineis in apertione mysteriorum Jeremiæ prophetæ; ecce, ait, præter historicum, moralem, tropologicum, etc. . . . 'Item xxii. circa principium, ita dicitur 'ad quam Scripturam tenetur populus tertii status ad Vetus Testamentum, et populus secundi ad novum quantum cumque hoc displiciat hominibus generationis istius.'"

<sup>4</sup> "Sic in principio tertii status erunt tres similes illorum, scilicet vir indutus lineis, et angelus quidam habens falcem acutem, et alius angelus habens sigorum Dei vivi." (Here the MS. 1726 bears between the lines: "Scilicet sanctus Franciscus") "et habuit" (D'Argentré "habebit") "similiter angelos duodecim in primo statu, et Christus in secundo."

ment, which has no greater relation to *The Introduction*, always cites the works of Joachim according to their proper divisions, and mentions as distinct pieces the notes of Gérard. The most probable conclusion to be drawn from this is, that the two works were censured by the Commission of Anagni; first, *The Introductorium*, the continuous text composed by Gérard; second, a sort of new edition, or, if it be preferred, a series of extracts from the three authentic works of Joachim, with the notes of Gérard,<sup>1</sup> either on the margin or in the text itself. It is this last book which Master Florent, the promoter of the Commission, held in his hand, and from which he read. The two associate readers, Friar Bonvalet and Friar Peter of Anagni, however, held in their hands the actual works of Joachim, verified the quotations, and distinguished the ones which belonged to Joachim from the ones which belonged to Gérard. Sometimes, in fact, the Anagni *procès-verbaux* seem to give the words of the two authors without distinguishing between them.

For the rest, perfect accord exists between the ideas contained in the notes of Gérard, cited by the Commission of Anagni, and the ideas of *The Liber Introductorius*. All these notes are written according to the ideas of John of Parma and the exalted section of the Order of Saint Francis. The antipathy against the temporal papacy, the hatred against the rich clergy, the belief that the final abomination would proceed from a mundane and Simonaical pope, the fixing of that fatal date in the year 1260, the belief that the appearance of the Antichrist is near, and that this monster will issue from Rome, Saint Francis designated as the renovator of the century, and Joachim represented as his precursor. All these are so many traits

<sup>1</sup>The nature of the gloss is particularly obvious in passages similar to the following:—"Illæ generationes valde breves erunt ut apparebit inferius in multis locis" (omitted by D'Argentré).

which, there can be no doubt, belonged to the school which, about the middle of the thirteenth century, rescued the name of Joachim in order to support its projects of social and religious reform. Many of the propositions of that school, unearthed by Salimbene<sup>1</sup> and by Jean de Menug,<sup>2</sup> are to be found textually in the fragments of Gérard, for whose preservation we are indebted to the reporters of Anagni.

As to the respective parts taken by John of Parma and Gérard in the composition of *The Introductorium*, our documents are silent on the point. The passage in which "the Author" ranks himself as one of the twelve angels of Saint Francis, would become John of Parma better than Gérard. The reports mention only Gérard, because they, no doubt, were anxious to treat with respect the general of the Franciscans. Salimbene, on his side, threw all the responsibility on Gérard, and affected great zeal in describing the manner in which the Order had been known to punish such backslidings.<sup>3</sup> He cannot deny, nevertheless, that John of Parma was not a decided Joachimite, while, by holding such opinions,<sup>4</sup> he created for himself many difficulties. At a later period, Nicholas Eymeric, having, in the quality of Dominican, no longer the same motives for reserve, placed purely and simply, under the name of John of Parma, the list of errors which constituted the doctrine of *The Eternal Gospel*. Certainly, he was in a sense the apostle and the principal interpreter of the doctrines which claimed to have the authority of the name of Abbot Joachim. Nevertheless, there is nothing to warrant the belief that John of Parma had directly participated in the compilation of the book upon which had been heaped so many anathemas. As touching Gérard de Borgo San-Donnino, the proofs are positive. Fra Salimbene, his colleague, and

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 123, 240.

<sup>2</sup> *Roman de la Rose*, line 12,014, *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> Pp. 103, 203, 236.

<sup>4</sup> Pp. 98, 124, 131, *et seq.*



countrymen and friend, accuses him, many times over, of having composed a deplorable book in order to falsify the doctrine of Joachim,<sup>1</sup> and he recounts the overwhelming disgraces which overtook him, without flinching in his obstinancy. Affo, who was the first to know this important text, then unpublished, and after him Sbaraglia and Tiraboschi, ranged themselves with reason under the peremptory authority of Fra Salimbene.

It results, from all that precedes, that we have the text of what was strictly called *The Eternal Gospel* in the three principal authentic works of Joachim. As regards the notes of Gérard, they are very probably lost beyond recall, with the exception of the fragments which have been preserved in the indictments of the Commission of Anagni. For a still stronger reason, we must despair of ever finding the complete text of *The Introductorium*. The rigour with which heterodox books were proscribed in the Middle Ages explains such a disappearance. Several years after the condemnation of 1255, Salimbene saw a copy, on paper, of the work of Gérard, which had been copied at Rome by a notary of Imola. Here the guardian of a convent came to consult him, as an old Joachimite, as to the value of this writing. Salimbene took alarm, fearing, perhaps, some snare, and told him that he must burn the volume immediately: which was done.<sup>2</sup>

As the volume which Master Florent possessed had for its principal text a series of extracts from the writings of Joachim, we are at liberty to ask whether the compilation contained in No. 1726 of Sorbonne, from folio 1 to folio 78 (the first document above referred to), ought to be identified with this mysterious book. But the notes of Friar Gérard, such as we find them in the indictments of the Anagni commission, are not to be read in our manuscript. We find only in

<sup>1</sup> P. 103, *et seq.*; 223, *et seq.*      <sup>2</sup> Pp. 235-36, compare pp. 234-35.

the margin short *scholia*, designed to call attention to the principal ideas of Joachim, particularly those upon which Gérard insisted the most. A much graver difficulty arises from the fact that, amongst the extracts used by Master Florent, he had only citations of the three great authentic works of Joachim, whilst, in our manuscript, the apocryphal commentaries on Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the *De Oneribus Provinciarum* hold an important place. We must observe, moreover, that the compilation contained in our No. 1726 seems sometimes to depend on the humour of the copyist; in it there are blanks and repetitions.<sup>1</sup> We cannot identify it with the edition given by Gérard. We believe that, amongst the Joachimite writings which have been preserved, the one which most nearly resembles the work of Gérard is the opusculum commencing *Helias jam venit*, mentioned above, pages 238-240. At what date are we to fix the composition of the *Liber Introductorius in Evangelium Æternum*? The fourth document above mentioned gives us, in regard to this, the most precise indication. One of the errors which we find in the *Liber Introductorius* is the fixing of the reign of the Holy Spirit at six years from then, in the year 1260,<sup>2</sup> which dates back the composition of the book to the year 1254. This is likewise the precise date assigned by Guillaume de Saint-Amour,<sup>3</sup> and well known to all the savants who have treated of the affairs of the University of Paris

<sup>1</sup> Florent no doubt alludes to similar compositions in his Council of Arles: *Plurima super his phantasiis commentaria facta descripserunt.* (*Labbe*, vol. xiv. p. 242.)

<sup>2</sup> D'Argentré, p. 164: "Quod novum Testamentum non durabit in virtute sua nisi per sex annos proxime futuros, scilicet usque ad annum incarnationis M.CC.LX." D'Argentré's text incorrectly gives 1269. Compare D'Argentré, p. 165 at the top; Salimbene, pp. 123, 223, 231, 240.

<sup>3</sup> "Jam publice posita fuit ad explicandum Anno Domino 1254. (*De peric. noviss. temp.* Opp. p. 38.)

and of the Roman Court of that epoch.<sup>1</sup> By combining the principal facts which have been deduced from this discussion, we arrive at the following conclusions :—

1. *The Eternal Gospel*, in the opinion of the thirteenth century, meant a *doctrine*, ascribed to the Abbot Joachim, in regard to the appearance of a third religious state which was to succeed the Gospel of Christ, and to serve as the definitive law of humanity.

2. This doctrine is only vaguely expressed in the authentic writings of the Abbot Joachim. Joachim contented himself with instituting a comparison between the Old and New Testaments, and casts only timid glances into the future.

3. The name of Joachim was unearthed about the middle of the thirteenth century by the ardent section of the Franciscan school. He is made to foretell the birth of Saint Francis and his Order; he is made to play a part as touching Saint Francis analogous to that which John the Baptist played in respect of Jesus; finally, there is given to the doctrine attributed to him the name of *The Eternal Gospel*.

4. This expression did not convey to the majority of those who heard or uttered it the idea of a distinct work. It was the *etiquette* of a doctrine, just as the expression of the "Three Impostors" summed up the averroistic scepticism, proceeding from a study of Arabian philosophy and from the court of Frederick II.

5. Nevertheless, the name of *The Eternal Gospel* was given in a more precise sense to the collection of the principal works of Joachim.

6. Quite distinct from this collection, there was an *Introduction to the Eternal Gospel*, a work of moderate dimensions, which was composed, or at least brought to light, by Gérard de Borgo Sandonnino in the year 1254.

<sup>1</sup> *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, vol. xx. pp. 27, 28.

7. This introduction was the preface to an abridged edition of the works of Joachim, accompanied by commentaries by Gérard. These two works, comprised under the compendious title of *The Eternal Gospel*, transmitted by the Bishop of Paris to the pope in 1254, were the occasion of the censures of the Commission of Anagni in 1255.

8. The text of the *Introduction to The Eternal Gospel* seems to be lost, but the doctrine has been preserved to us in the acts of the Assembly of Anagni, and in the other condemnations pronounced against *The Eternal Gospel*. (MSS. de Sorbonne, 1706, 1726; Mazarine Library, 391.) As for the notes of Gérard, there remain some fragments in the second Anagni document.

An example will better illustrate the relationship between these divers texts, and how the one has emanated from the other by amplification or by interpolation. "In chapter viii. of *The Introduction to the Eternal Gospel*," say the cardinals of the Commission of Anagni, "the author states that, even as at the commencement of the first state, there appeared three great men, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the third of whom—that is to say, Jacob—had twelve persons in his suite (his twelve sons); just as, at the commencement of the second state, there were three great men, Zachariah, John the Baptist and Christ, the God-man, who seemed to have had twelve persons in his suite, (the twelve apostles); just as, at the commencement of the third state, there shall be three great men, similar to the first, to wit, the man clothed in linen, the angel holding the sharp scythe, and another angel having in his hand the sign of the living God. The latter shall have, in like manner, in his suite, twelve angels, just as Jacob had twelve in the first state, and Christ twelve in the second. That by the man clad in linen," continue the cardinals, "*the author of this writing* means Joachim, which is proved in chapter xxi., towards the middle . . . and by chapter

xii., in which we find these words: To that angel who holds the sign of the living God, and who appeared about 1200 of the incarnation of the Lord, an angel," add the cardinals, "whom Friar Gérard has formally recognised as being no other than Saint Francis."

Here is a theory, clear and well defined, and which could only have been realised about the middle of the thirteenth century, in the bosom of the exalted Franciscan school. Again, if we open the *Concordance* of Joachim, we find there, in the second treatise of Book I, the parallel of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob on the one part, of Zachariah, John the Baptist and Christ on the other part, several times repeated, but not expressed with the same precision; above all, there is no trace of a future triad, destined to found a new religious state of humanity, a triad of which Joachim shall be one. In general, the views of Joachim as to a third state coming to succeed the New Testament, just as the New Testament has succeeded the Old, are very shadowy and barely indicated.<sup>1</sup> The definiteness which later on was ascribed to his doctrine on this point, his prophecies regarding the institution of mendicant orders and the displacement of the secular clergy by an order which was to go barefoot; the prediction, in a word, of *The Eternal Gospel*—all this was the work of the Joachimites of the thirteenth century, the which, finding in the ideas of the Abbot Joachim di Flor, as touching the parallel of the two Testaments, a suitable basis for their theology, adopted these ideas, and added to them the announcement of a third revelation, the precursors of which were to be Joachim, Saint Francis, the Messiah, and of which they themselves were to be the apostles.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Concordance*, 1, iv. last chapter, and especially 1, v. chap. lxxxiv. These passages may be interpolations by Gérard, as also that wherein Joachim directly predicts the Mendicant Orders.



## VI.

## THE DOCTRINE OF THE ETERNAL GOSPEL.

The study of documents confirms, then, in minutest detail, the account of Fra Salimbene. The doctrine of *The Eternal Gospel* attained great public celebrity in the Order of Saint Francis under the generalship, and with the protection, more or less avowed, of John of Parma: but John of Parma wrote nothing under that title. The author of the accursed book was Gérard de Borgo San-Donnino. Nor were Gérard and John of Parma themselves the inventors of the system which startled Christianity in 1254. Joachimism had for a long time taken root amongst the ardent disciples of Saint Francis. Salimbene relates<sup>1</sup> how that an aged, holy abbot of the Order of Flor came to Pisa begging the monks to take charge of the books of Joachim, which were in the possession of his convent. This convent was situated between Lucca and Pisa; and he was afraid, he said, of its being pillaged by Frederick II. The best theologians of the convent at Pisa applied themselves to the reading of the books brought by the aged abbot: they were struck by the coincidences which the prophecies of Joachim bore to the events of the time, and, laying aside theology, they became furious Joachimites. It would not be too rash to suppose that the books thus mysteriously confided to the Franciscans of Pisa were the apocryphal writings of Joachim, such as the *Commentary on Jeremiah*, which was actually composed about that time.<sup>2</sup> Enthusiasm does not

<sup>1</sup> P. 101.

<sup>2</sup> The opponents of the Joachimites, seeming to have doubts as to the authenticity of these MSS., call them "prophetias hominum fantasticorum." Salimbene, p. 131.

comprehend veracity as it does rough common sense: it does not consider itself subject to the scrupulous rules of literary probity, which are proper to critical and reflective ages. The prophet, persuaded of the superior truth of the inspiration of conscience, does not scruple to call to his aid that which the sober-minded man characterises as fraud and imposture. Nearly forty years had rolled past since the death of the Abbot of Flor. His books, kept secret and concealed in the depths of the cells of a few monks,<sup>1</sup> were known only to a small number of votaries. His person, surrounded by a legendary halo, his character of prophet being already universally accepted, the belief that was entertained that he had received a special inspiration from the Holy Spirit to predict the destinies of the Church, all made him an excellent patron for the doctrine that they were anxious to establish, and the germs of which were actually to be found in his writings. The Patriarch of Flor was put *en rapport* with the new movement: he was made to predict the appearance of two orders destined to change the face of Christendom.<sup>2</sup> His legend was dovetailed into that of Saint Francis. The great authority of Saint Francis was derived from the stigmata which assimilated him to Christ: for Joachim also had stigmata. Like Francis, he

<sup>1</sup> "Libri Joachitici, qui a majoribus nostris usque ad hæc tempora remanserunt intacti, ut pote latitantes apud quosdam religiosos in angulis et antris, doctoribus indiscussi." Council of Arles, Labbe, vol. xiv. col. 241.

<sup>2</sup> Salimbene, pp. 118, 123, 124, 338, 389, 403. A tradition greatly credited among the Chroniclers of Mendicant Orders, even pretended that Joachim caused S. Francis and S. Dominic to be painted in the Church of S. Mark at Venice in the habiliments since accepted and preserved by Christian iconography. The idea that in the mosaics of S. Mark, representing scenes taken from the Apocalypse, we have a representation of Joachim's ideas, is scarcely less improbable. Strange to say, the Jesuits pretended, also at a later date, to have been predicted by Joachim.—*Vide Acta S. S. Maii*, vol. vii. pp. 141-2.

went barefoot: like him, he embraced nature and animals in a universal love. Joachim thus soon became the precursor of Saint Francis, soon the founder of a new faith superior to that of the Catholic Church, destined to supplant it and to endure eternally. He himself was given a precursor in the person of a certain Cyril, a hermit of Mount Carmel, a prophet like himself, and whose oracles were characterised by a singular illuminism and boldness. His writings, whether genuine or apocryphal, were, in the eyes of the little church, a sort of revelation. Much less shackled than the Dominicans by the bonds of scholastic theology, sometimes indeed hardly Christians, the Franciscans enjoyed, in the matter of mystical speculations, as they did in science and poetry, a liberty of thought which, in the Middle Ages, is to be sought for in vain outside of their institution.

We cannot figure to ourselves, in fact,—at least from the perusal of the curious work of Fra Salimbene,—to what extent the Joachimite ideas had penetrated the order, and how much these had stimulated its mental activity. A holy man of Provence, Hugues de Digne, who preached before Saint Louis, was the oracle of the sect; people flocked from all parts to his cell at Hyères, in order to listen to the terrors and the hopes contained in the new Apocalypse.<sup>1</sup> He had in his possession the whole of the works of Joachim engrossed in large letters. Generally speaking, he was regarded as a prophet, and he was the father of a kind of third order of wandering mendicants who were called *Saccati* or *Boscarioli*. Hugues was the intimate friend of John of Parma, and perhaps his imitator in these dangerous novelties. Salimbene came often to see him, and spoke of him

<sup>1</sup> Salimbene, pp. 98, *et seq.*; 124, 141-2, 148, 319, 320. Compare *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, xxi. p. 293; Albanès's *Vie de Sainte Douceline*, p. 47, *et seq.*

as one inspired. His sister, *Santa Douceline*, was the foundress of the *Beguines* of Marseilles, and traces of the trials which her relations with John of Parma and the chiefs of the Franciscan movement cost her, are still discernible under the truly edifying spirit of her Provençal biography,<sup>1</sup> which has come down to us from her.

The fever of Joachimism attacked the greatest minds. One of the first men of the century, Adam of Marsh, the friend of Roger Bacon, in the heart of England, eagerly received from Italy the smallest fragments of the works of the Abbot of Flor, and transmitted them immediately to his friend Robert Grossetête, Bishop of Lincoln,<sup>2</sup> drawing his attention to the menaces which they contained against the vices of the clergy. Spreading rapidly from convent to convent along the Rhine and the Saône, Joachimism penetrated especially to Champagne. It was at Provins that Salimbene encountered the two leaders of the sect—Bartholomew Ghiscolo of Parma, and Gérard de Borgo San-Donnino.<sup>3</sup> In general, the whole of these Joachimites were real saints, though very free-thinking believers, attaching to their own ideas and the writings of their master as much importance as to the teachings of the Church and the authority of the Bible.

The general of the order, John of Parma, shared keenly these chimeras;<sup>4</sup> some of the affiliated mem-

<sup>1</sup> The *Vie de Sainte Douceline*, published by M. l'Abbe Albanès, Marseilles, 1879, pp. xlix, 35, 37, 99, 115, 137, 155. M. Paul Meyer was the first to notice the importance of this document in the history of the Franciscan movement.—*Les Derniers Troubadours de la Provence* (1871), p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> "Paucas particulas de variis expositionibus abbatis Joachim, quæ ante dies aliquot per quendam fratrem venientem de partibus transmontanis mihi sunt allatæ," in the *Monumenta Franciscana*, published by J. S. Brewer (London, 1858), pp. 146, 147. Compare Salimbene, p. 99.

<sup>3</sup> Salimbene, pp. 101, *et seq.*, 318.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 124, 131-33.

bers accorded him a place amongst the angelic precursors of the new Gospel:<sup>1</sup> it was even desired that he might select twelve companions, like Saint Francis.<sup>2</sup> But the most exalted of the Joachimites was Friar Gérard de Borgo San-Donnino. Gérard had been educated in the kingdom of Sicily; he was still a young man—instructed as became the fashion of the age—of an amiable character, and pure morals.<sup>3</sup> In 1248, we find him in the convent of Provins, immersed in the reading of the writings of Joachim, seeking to make proselytes, and already perplexing the whole house by his sombre prophecies. Ghiscolo and Salimbene supported him; but the French friars opposed to him an active resistance. About the year 1249, the small Joachimite circle at Provins was dissolved. Ghiscolo was sent to Sens, Salimbene to Autun, Gérard to Paris, to represent the province of Sicily in the University there. He studied there for four years. His ideas during that time became more exalted, and in 1254 he published the book which brought about so great a scandal. Numerous prophecies already designated the year 1260 as the critical year of the Christian world. Gérard boldly announced that that year would witness the inauguration of the new era. Some imperfectly understood passages of the Apocalypse (xi. 3; xii. 6; xx. 3 and 7) were reputed to sustain these strange calculations. In good truth, all the dreams of the new millenarians, through an arbitrary exegesis, yet one conformed to the spirit of the times, set out from the great source of Christian hopes—from the volume written at Patmos.

We read in chapter xvi. of that mysterious book: "I saw an angel who fled to the zenith, holding *The Eternal Gospel*, in order to announce to those who are upon the earth, to every nation, to every tribe, to

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 156.

<sup>2</sup> Salimbene, pp. 317-19.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 102, *et seq.*; 233, *et seq.*



every tongue, to every people." The imagination of the Middle Ages could not allow that text to fall into oblivion: it was compared with the Sibylline oracles, accepted by the tradition of the Fathers, and which (sprung themselves from the effervescence of the ancient millenarian sects) embraced powerful aspirations as to the future. The corruption of the Church (far removed from the predictions of the Gospel), led some minds to conceive an imaginary state, when the perfection, so many times promised, would be finally realised.

"The Father reigned four thousand years in the Old Testament," said the preachers of the new faith:<sup>1</sup> the Son reigned till the year 1200: then the Spirit of life departed from the two Testaments, in order to give place to the Eternal Gospel: the year 1260 will see the commencement of the era of the Holy Spirit. The reign of the laity, corresponding with that of the Father, lasted during the time of the old law; the reign of the secular clergy, corresponding to that of the Son, lasted during the time of the new: the third age will be the reign of an order composed of equal proportions of laymen and clerics,<sup>2</sup> and especially devoted to the Holy Spirit. A new sacerdotalism will replace the old; no one shall then be a priest or arrogate to himself the right to teach except upon the condition of going barefoot.<sup>3</sup> The sacraments of the new law have

<sup>1</sup> D'Argentré, op. cit. p. 163, *et seq.* D'Argentré left out the following passage:—Item in iii. capitulo, circa medium, dicitur "Opera quæ fecit Deus trinitas ab initio usque nunc sunt opera Patris" (MS. 1706 reads 'Trinitatis,') "tantum, et post pauca: 'Et illud tempus in quod operatus est Deus Pater est principium temporis Patris, et potest dici primus status mundi, etc.'"

<sup>2</sup> This was one of the peculiarities of the order of S. Francis, which admitted laymen in its Brotherhood.

<sup>3</sup> D'Argentré printed in error *independentium* instead of *nudipedum*. He left out the indication of the censured passages, five in number. We read in the 4th document, "Quod nullus est simpliciter idoneus, etc., nisi illi qui nudis pedibus incedunt," D'Argentré puts here, "Idoneus Evangelio;" Nicholas Eymeric has, "Quod nullus simplex homo est idoneus ad instruendum hominem alium de spiritualibus et æternis nisi. . . ."

only six years more to last.<sup>1</sup> Jesus Christ and his apostles did not reach perfection in the contemplative life. Until Joachim, an active life sanctified; now an active life has become useless; it is the contemplative life whose traditions the successors of Joachim have preserved, which justifies. Whence it follows that the clerical order shall perish, and shall be replaced by a third order more perfect. The order of the monks, predicted by the Psalmist when he said: 'Excellent ropes have fallen to me as my share.'<sup>2</sup> This order shall grow stronger in proportion as the order of the clergy shall decay. It shall be the order of the meek.<sup>3</sup> In the first age of the world, the government of the Church was confided by the Father to certain great men of the order who were married, and this it is which constituted the legitimacy of that class. In the second age of the world, authority was confided by the Son to certain of the clerical order, and this it is which constituted the glory of that order. In the third age, authority shall be confided by the Holy Ghost to one or to several of the order of monks, who shall thus be glorified. When the preachers of that order shall be persecuted by the clergy, they shall be at liberty to make up with the infidels, and it is much to be feared, it is added, 'that they will make up with them only to lead them to a contest with the Church of Rome.'<sup>4</sup>

"The discernment of the spiritual sense of the Scriptures has not been confided to the pope: what has been confided to him is only the discernment of the literal meaning. If he permits himself to decide on the spiritual sense, his judgment is to be regarded as rash, and no account must be taken of it. Spiritual men are not obliged to obey the Roman Church, nor to acquiesce in its judgment in matters pertaining to God.

<sup>1</sup> "Quod sacramenta novæ legis non durabunt a modo nisi per sex annos."—*Preger*, p. 36.

<sup>2</sup> I need not point out to Hebrew scholars the curious misrepresentation here, Psalm 16-6.

<sup>3</sup> "Ordo parvulorum," an illusion to the Fratres Minores.—Cf. Salimbene, p. 122.

<sup>4</sup> "Quod prædicatores et doctores religiosi, quando infestabuntur a clericis, transibunt ad infideles; et timendum est ne ad hoc transeant ut congregent eos in prælium contra Romanam Ecclesiam, juxta doctrinam beati Joannis, Apoc. xvi."

“The Greeks were wise in separating themselves from the Roman Church; they walked more according to the spirit than the Latins, and are nearer salvation.<sup>1</sup> The Holy Spirit saved the Greeks, the Son works the salvation of the Latins, the eternal Father watches over the Jews, and shall save them from the hatred of men, without its being necessary for them to abandon Judaism.<sup>2</sup>

“The Old Testament, the work when the Father governed, may be compared to the original sky, or to the light of the stars: the New Testament, the work of the time when the Son governed, may be compared to the second sky, or to the light of the moon: the Eternal Gospel, the work of the time which shall be governed by the Holy Spirit, may be compared to the light of the sun.<sup>3</sup> The Old Testament represents the vestibule;<sup>4</sup> the New Testament represents the holy place; the Eternal Gospel the holy of holies. The first was the age of law and fear; the second the age of grace and faith; the third shall be the age of love. The first was the period of slavery, the second the period of filial servitude, the third shall be the period of liberty. The first was a starry night, the second was the dawn, the third shall be the broad day. The first represented winter, the second spring, the third shall represent summer. The first was the shell, the second the stone, the third shall be the kernel. The first bore nettles, the second roses, the third shall bear lilies. The first is represented by water, the second by wine, the third by oil; or, rather, the first by earth, the second by water, the third by fire. The first is represented by Septuagesima, the second by Lent, the third by Easter joys.<sup>5</sup> The Gospel of Christ is literal, the

<sup>1</sup> “Quod papa græcus (Nicholas Eymeric, *populus græcus*) magis ambulat secundum Evangelium” (Meyenberg, *Spiritum*). The Magdeburg centuriators also have “Papa græcus.”

<sup>2</sup> D’Argentré, p. 165, instead of *infine* read *in fine*.

<sup>3</sup> D’Argentré makes another mistake in this passage. We must read—“Comparat vetus Testamentum primo cælo, Evangelium Christi secundo cælo, Evangelium æternum tertio cælo.”

<sup>4</sup> Atrio D’Argentré gives incorrectly *Sanctuario* according to No. 1706.

<sup>5</sup> See *Concordance*, iv. cap. lxxxiv. I presume many of Gérard’s interpolations found their way into this portion of Joachim’s text.

Eternal Gospel shall be spiritual, and shall deserve to be called the Gospel of the Holy Spirit. The Gospel of Christ was enigmatical, the new Gospel shall be without parables and without figures; it is of it which Saint Paul spoke: 'We now see as in a glass darkly, but then' (that is to say, in the third state of humanity) 'shall we see face to face,'<sup>1</sup>—the truth of both Testaments shall appear unveiled; the divine Scriptures shall be divided into three parts,—the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Gospel, meaning by this last word the Eternal Gospel.<sup>2</sup> The latter shall be as obligatory on men of the third state as the Old Testament was on men of the first state, as the New Testament was on men of the second state, 'although this truth,' it is added, 'may be unpalatable to men of the present generation.'

"Three great men presided at the inauguration of the Old Testament, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the last attended by twelve personages (the twelve patriarchs). Three great men presided at the advent of the New

<sup>1</sup> This passage is wrongly given by D'Argentré: Item x. capitulo D, dicit quod tertius status mundi, qui est proprius Spiritus Sancti, erit sine ænigmate et sine figuris; unde, circa medium ejusdem capituli, ponit hæc verba: "Apostolus, 1 Cor. xiii. loquens de fide et caritate, distinguendo statum fidei, scilicet secundum statum mundi, qui ænigmaticus est, a statu caritatis qui proprius Spiritus Sancti est et est sine ænigmate, figuravit duorum Testamentorum (differentiam), ut pater alibi, quia comparando unum ad aliud dicit: *Ex parte cognoscimus et ex parte prophetamus*, et hoc quantum ad secundum statum; *quum autem venerit quod perfectum est*, scilicet tempus caritatis, quod est tertius statu mundi, *evacuabitur quod ex parte est*, quasi dicat. Tunc cessabunt omnes figuræ, et veritas duorum Testamentorum sine velamine apparebit; et statim subdit. *Videmus nunc per speculum,*" etc.

<sup>2</sup> D'Argentré left out nearly all this passage:—"Item xxviii. capitulo A, dicit Sacram Scripturam divisam in tres partes scilicet in Vetus Testamentum et Novum et Evangelium, quod capitulum totum est notabile, et totum legatur. Idem expresse habetur xxx. capitulo, ubi dicit: Hæc tria sacra volumina;" et eodem, capitulo D, dicit: "Alia est Scriptura divina quæ data est fidelibus eo tempore quo Deus Pater dictus est operari, et alia quæ data Christianis eo tempore quo Deus filius operari dictus est, et alia quæ nobis data" (D'Argentré, danda) "est eo tempore quo Spiritus Sanctus proprietate mysterii operatur (D'Argentré, *Mysterii Trinitatis Operabitur.*)



Testament, Zachariah, John the Baptist and Christ, attended by his twelve apostles. In like manner three great men shall preside at the foundation of the third state, the three monks: the man clothed in linen (Joachim), the angel bearing the keen-edged scythe (Saint Dominic),<sup>1</sup> and the angel bearing the sign of the living God (Saint Francis), by whom God renewed the apostolic life, and who, like Christ, had twelve apostles. The year 1200 was thus the advent of the new men, the year in which the Gospel of Christ lost its efficacy.

“The doctrine of Joachim abrogates the Old and New Testaments. The Gospel of Christ was not the really true Gospel of the Kingdom; it did not succeed in building up the true Church;<sup>2</sup> it did not lead anyone to perfection.<sup>3</sup> Authority belongs more to the Eternal Gospel, which, being announced by the coming of Elias, is about to be preached to every nation. The preachers of the new Gospel will be superior to those of the primitive Church. At the approach of the solemn day, those who preside over the order of the monks shall detach themselves more and more from the age, and prepare themselves for rejoining the ancient people—the Jews. The triumph of the order of the monks, it is vaguely added, will be effected by a man, or by several men, who shall serve as its representatives, and whose glory shall be the glory of the order itself. There shall rise up a man in the religious orders who shall be preferred to all others in dignity and glory. This triumph shall be preceded by the reign of abomination; that is to say, by the reign of a Simonaical false pope, who shall occupy the pontifical chair towards the close of the sixth age of the world. ‘Then tribulation,’ said Friar Gérard, ‘will be such as has never been equalled before, and it shall effect the temporal as well as the spiritual order: it shall take place about the year 1250. Then shall appear the Antichrist. Next, after a short

<sup>1</sup> This interpretation is omitted from the MS., doubtless because the Dominican censors would have been displeased to see the name of their partiarch mixed up with these dangerous doctrines.

<sup>2</sup> “Nec ædificatorium ecclesiæ,” and not “Nec ædificatio,” as D’Argentré has it.

<sup>3</sup> “Quod Evangelium Christi neminem ducit ad perfectionem, mittit by D’Argentré.



interval of peace, shall commence a still worse tribulation. The latter shall be wholly spiritual, and, in consequence, more dangerous.’”

To these passages were added calculations borrowed from Joachim, in regard to the genealogies of the Old Testament considered as prophetic,<sup>1</sup> and a series of predictions, in which the writer gives full rein to his hatred against the Church of Rome and the powers of the age. All the prophets were summoned to announce the substitution of a poor and monastic church for the official church, the early coming of Antichrist, the abomination of desolation enthroned in the holy place; that is to say, the advent of a worldly pope, who would introduce into the churches his courtesans and his horses; finally, the imminent ruin of that presumptuous Babylon who had gorged itself with the tribute of the entire world, and persecuted the just when the latter reproached her with her impieties. It is related that Joachim, when consulted by Richard Cœur de Lion in regard to Antichrist, replied that he had already been born in Rome, and that he would reign there, in order to raise himself, as the prophet had foretold, higher even than God.<sup>2</sup> Others said that he disapproved of the Crusades because the infidels were not so far removed as the Latins from the Eternal Gospel.<sup>3</sup> To those who were annoyed at these incessant jeremiads he

<sup>1</sup> “Primus est error enumerandi carnales genealogias,” and not “annales” as D’Argentré has it. We must then read as follows:—“Secundus est studium noscendi momenta et tempora eorum quæ venient vel venerunt in secundo statu mundi per ea quæ venerunt in primo statu mundi.”

<sup>2</sup> Roger de Hoveden, apud Saville, *Rer. angl. Script.*, pp. 681-82. It is stated that a similar reply was made by Joachim to Adam Perseigne. See *Acta S. S. Maii*, vol. vii. pp. 136, 139; Hauréau, *Hist. Litt. du Maine*, i. pp. 29-33.

<sup>3</sup> J. Wolf, *Centenarii*, p. 497. It is very remarkable that in 1248, the time of the departure of Saint Louis, the Joachimites evinced so little satisfaction.—Salimbene, p. 102.

is said to have responded: "Those who hate the kingdom of heaven do not wish to destroy the kingdom of the world; those who do not love Jerusalem do not wish the downfall of Egypt.<sup>1</sup> The strongest scriptural figures were invoked to paint to the imagination the chastisement of the mercenary prelates and the vengeance of the saints. The abuses of wealth, and the temporal power of the Church, were assailed with a virulence scarcely known to the most passionate outbursts of the Reformation.

Such were the strange thoughts which were fermenting under the cassocks of a few monks, and who in 1254 dared to show themselves in open day. I do not know whether I am wandering from the real gist of these productions, but seeing the persistence with which, under one form or another, such ideas were produced for more than a century, and always in the bosom of the Franciscan family; seeing what connection they had with the heresies, the popular movements, the political revolutions of the times; seeing that the exalted sectaries declare that the schismatic Greeks, the Jews, and the infidels themselves, from whom they expected to meet less opposition, were to be preferred to the Latin Church, over which they despaired in triumphing, I do not think I am exaggerating when I say that there was in this an abortive attempt to create a religion. It only needed a little more encouragement, and the thirteenth century, in many respects so extraordinary, would have witnessed the growth of a new religion, the germ of which was contained in the Franciscan institution; nay, if it had depended upon the fanatical members of the new order, the world, then Christian, would have become Franciscan.<sup>2</sup> We shall

<sup>1</sup> Salimbene, p. 108.

<sup>2</sup> Such was undoubtedly the opinion of Guillaume de Saint-Amour. "Jam sunt 55 anni quod aliqui laborant ad mutandum Evangelium Christi in aliud Evangelium, quod dicunt fore per-

now see how these pretensions miscarried in presence of the scholastic rigour of the Gallican Church, the firm hand of the Court of Rome, the good sense of a lay society which was springing into life, and, above all, by the impracticability of the objects it was sought to compass.

Paris, in which the new Gospel was born, was of all places in the world the least favourable to its progress. Their dreams of an imaginary perfection, their vague aspirations towards an ideal and superhuman state, broke down before the practical turn of the French mind. We are surprised at the justness and clearness with which the representatives of the University of Paris at that epoch—Guillaume de Saint-Amour and Gérard d'Abbeville, strong advocates of religious mendicity—perceived the social bearing of the new monastic institutions.<sup>1</sup> No doubt religious people who did not share the exaggerated theories of the Franciscans, and in particular the Dominicans, who, far from sharing it, were its most persistent adversaries,<sup>2</sup> might justly reclaim against the affectation of mixing up the doctrine of monastical poverty with that of the Eternal Gospel. St Thomas Aquinas showed himself almost as severe as Guillaume de Saint-Amour in the blame which he cast upon the ideas of the Joachimite school, and Guillaume de Tocco, his biographer, relates that, finding in a monastery the works of the Abbot of Flor, he read them through and through, underlined everything that appeared to him erroneous, and imperiously forbade that all that his infallible authority had

fectius, melius et dignius quod appellant Evangelium Spiritus Sancti, sive Evangelium æternum, quo adveniente, evacuabitur, ut dicunt, Evangelium Christi." *De Periculis Novissimorum Temporum*, p. 38. (Opera Constantiæ, Parisiis, 1632.)

<sup>1</sup>See the article of M. Daunou on John of Parma (*Hist. Litt. de la France*, vol. xx.) and above all that of M. Victor Le Clerc on Guillaume de Saint-Amour and Gérard d'Abbeville (*Ibid.* vol. xxi.).  
Salimbene, pp. 104, 108,

thus annulled was neither to be read nor believed in.<sup>1</sup>

It cannot be doubted that, during the heat of the struggle, at a moment when every sort of weapon was made use of by one to bring about the condemnation of one's adversaries, the University did not seize on *The Eternal Gospel* as a fair pretext for discrediting the monks, in like manner as they themselves used against the University the reproach of Averroism and the blasphemy of the *Three Impostors*. It is rare that the polemic interdicts himself from employing the unfair manœuvre which consists in making use of, against a doctrine, the exaggerations it may embrace. This time, however, the calumny was not without some foundation in truth. The abuse of logic, and the authority accorded to the Arab interpretations, gave a certain colour to the accusations brought against the University. On the other hand, there was a real affinity between *The Eternal Gospel* and the doctrine of monastic poverty, which the doctors of the University had little difficulty in recognising. Mendicity had become the pretext for the strangest doctrines. Guillaume de Saint-Amour did not cease to preach against the *vagrants* and the *bons-valets*, and other sects of mendicants, who maintained that "manual labour was a crime, that it was necessary always to pray, that the earth brought forth more abundantly through prayer than by labour." The Bishop of Paris, anxious to give the University the pleasure of seeing a monk convicted of the greatest errors, referred *The Introduction to the Eternal Gospel* to Pope Alexander IV. The pope nominated the commission of three cardinals, whom we have seen exercising their functions. In the month of July 1255 the condemnation was pro-

<sup>1</sup> "Ubi aliquid erroneum reperit vel suspectum, cum linea subducta damnavit, quia totum legi et credi prohibuit quod ipse sua docta manu cassavit." Acta S. S. Martii, vol. i. p. 667.



nounced, the preliminary portions of which have come down to us.

This was a satisfaction which the papacy, following out its rule of sacrificing extremes to one another, accorded to the University; but out of regard for the order upon which the condemnation seemed to fall, the pope ordered the condemned book to be secretly burned at Anagni, whereas the judgment pronounced the following year against the *De periculis novissimorum temporum* of Guillaume de Saint-Amour was given the greatest publicity.<sup>1</sup> This worthy Gallican Church was none the less proud of having arrested the progress of a perverse doctrine, and in believing that it had preserved Christianity from a great danger. The childish sentiment of satisfaction which the University experienced from its victory, is to be found in the miserable verses of the University poet, Jean de Meung:—

Et se ne fut la bonne garde  
 De l'Université qui garde  
 Le chief de crestienté,  
 Tout eust été bien tourmenté  
 Quant, par mauvaise intention,  
 En l'an d'incarnation  
 Mille et deux cent, cent et cinquante  
 N'est homs vivant qui m'en démente,  
 Fu baillé, et c'est chose voire,  
 Pour prendre commun exempoire  
 Ung livre de par le grande diable  
 Dit l'Evangile pardurable,  
 Que le Saint-Esperit menistre  
 Si com il aparoit au tistre . . .  
 A Paris, n'eut home ne feme  
 Au parvis devaut Nostre Dame  
 Qui lors avoir ne le peust  
 A transcrire, s'il li pléust . . .

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<sup>1</sup> Matthieu Paris, loc. cit. Fabricius indeed remarks that the condemnation of *The Eternal Gospel* is not mentioned in the Bullary, whereas that of the *De Periculis* is reported at length in it. (*Codex Apocryphas*, N. T., 2d ed., vol. i. pp. 331, 338.)



L'Université, qui lors iére  
 Endormie, leva la chiére,  
 Du bruit du livre s'esveilla,  
 Ains s'arma pour aller encontre,  
 Quand el vit cet horrible monstre . . .  
 Mais cil qui la le livre mirent  
 Saillirent sus et le repirent.<sup>1</sup>

The blow thus dealt at *The Eternal Gospel* could not fail to reach the apostles of the new doctrine. Although John of Parma had the good sense to keep in the background, and to be on his guard, as it is easy to believe, against the exaggerations of his own partisans, yet his zeal for the observance of the rule, his severity against the lukewarm members, raised up powerful enemies against him, who seized the occasion in order to ruin him. A general chapter, held at the Ara Coeli in February, 1257, preferred the gravest accusations against him. He was accused of preferring the doctrine of Joachim to the Catholic faith, and of having as friends Léonard and Gérard, declared Joachimites. He was forced to resign the generalship. An intermediate party was formed between the indifferent portion of the order and the rigorist party: an orthodox and decorous mysticism gained the ascendancy in the person of Saint Bonaventura. The first care of the new general was to bring to trial his predecessor and his two associates, Léonard and Gérard. These two monks were condemned to irons, *to the bread of tribulation and the water of anguish*; that is to say, to the horrors of a subterranean dungeon where no one could visit them. Gérard died there without seeking to renounce his hopes; <sup>2</sup> he was denied ecclesiastical sepulture;

<sup>1</sup> *Roman de la Rose*, verse 11,994, *et seq.* of Méon's ed. See *Historiens de la Fr.*, vol. xxi. pp. 78, 119, 120, 698, 768; *P. Paris Chron. de Saint Denis*, vol. iv. p. 374; *Ancilloniana*, 1698, i. pp. 117, 118.

<sup>2</sup> Salimbene, pp. 102, 103, 233. According to another version, Gérard was let out of prison by Saint Bonaventura eighteen years afterwards, and Léonard died in prison. Fleury, *Hist. Eccl. Ch.*, lxxxiv. No. 27. Salimbene does not speak of Léonard,

his bones were interred in a corner of the garden set apart for offal.

As to John, the sympathies which his noble character had won for him, and, above all, the personal friendship of the new general, mitigated his disgrace. He was allowed to select the place of his retreat, and chose the little convent of Greccia, near Rieti. There he lived thirty-two years in solitary seclusion. He retained his Joachimite opinions without being questioned as to them. Two popes, it is said, thought of making him a cardinal; the greatest dignitaries of the court of Rome came to him to seek edification.<sup>1</sup> About the year 1289 he re-entered active life for a short time; he was anxious, however, to return to the Greeks, for whose reconciliation he had already laboured in his youth; but disease overtook him at Camerino, and he died there. His legend began to take form in his lifetime: it was modelled in its details on that of Francis of Assisi.<sup>2</sup> Miracles were wrought at his tomb; his party was even powerful enough to have him enrolled in the list of the canonised.

His friends, the Joachimites, with the exception of Gérard, all ended their lives as saints. Ghiscolo, on his deathbed, had such wonderful visions that all the friars who were present were astonished at them.<sup>3</sup> The good Salimbene continued to follow the joyous life of a spiritual vagabond, sometimes disclaiming against the errors of his youth, sometimes avowing with a certain pleasure that he himself had been at the Supper of the Joachimites, and that he had never known such amiable and pious men.<sup>4</sup> As all the heroes

<sup>1</sup> Salimbene, pp. 131, 133, 317.

<sup>2</sup> Salimbene, pp. 137-38. In regard to the circumstance of the twelve companions, see pp. 317-19. See also the *Life of Sainte Douceline*, p. 136, *et seq.* (Edition Albanès).

<sup>3</sup> Salimbene, pp. 101, 318.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 102, 103, 122, 129, 130, 131, 141, 148, 227, 233, 235, 236.

of this singular movement were very young, the expression "Eternal Gospel" died long before them. In fact, after 1256 this name disappeared from history, in which it had only figured for two or three years. Its fate resembles one of those banners eagerly made use of by the parties which one sees elevated in time of crises, to represent for a moment causes destined to many ulterior transformations.

## VII.

### THE DIVERSE FORTUNES OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE ETERNAL GOSPEL.

TO-DAY most people are agreed as to the great divisions of the intellectual history of the Middle Ages. Far from presenting a uniform shadow, as people so often imagine, the great night, which extends from the destruction of antique civilisation to the appearance of modern civilisation, unfolds to the eye clearly defined lines of a very intelligible design. The night really only lasted up to the eleventh century. Then took place a renaissance in philosophy, in poetry, in politics, and in art. This renaissance, which was first originated in France, attained its highest point of perfection in the first half of the thirteenth century; then it was arrested. Fanaticism, and the narrow scholastic spirit, the atrocities of the Dominican inquisition, the pedantry of the University of Paris, and the incapacity of the majority of contemporary sovereigns, brought about a complete decadence. The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were, for the whole of Europe, with the exception of Italy, backward ages; ages when thought was stagnant, when no one knew how to write, when art decayed, when poetry was silent; nevertheless, a latent fire

smouldered in the bosom of Italy. The real and final renaissance was in formation. Italy did a second time for humanity what Greece had done once previously. She re-discovered the principles of the true and the beautiful: she became the mistress of all art, all science, and the preceptress of the human species.

There is no great age without its religious movement. The renaissance of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries made attempts at reform. To those who study closely the history of the Middle Ages, the most surprising thing is that Protestantism did not spring into existence three centuries earlier. All the conditions of a religious revolution existed in the thirteenth century; all were, however, snapped in the bud. There took place in the thirteenth century what might have happened in the sixteenth, if Luther had been burned, if Charles V. had exterminated the reformers, if the Inquisition had succeeded everywhere in Europe as it succeeded in Spain and Italy. Aspirations in the direction of a spiritual church and a purer worship sprang into existence all around. *The Eternal Gospel* was only one of many attempts to substitute a new religious and social order for that which had been founded by the authority of the Church established.

In like manner, as the Italian renaissance could not have succeeded without the wind which blew on it from the Grecian world, so the religious movements of the thirteenth century were in as many respects the effects of the influence of the Eastern Church. In what concerned *The Eternal Gospel*, I have no manner of doubt that one had to go to the Greek Church to seek for its origin. Abbot Joachim, during the whole of his career, kept up the closest intercourse with Greece. Calabria, where he lived, and where his school was

continued by a hardly unbroken tradition, was semi-Greek. His principal disciples, the compilers of his legend, the prophetic personages with whom his name is associated, were Greeks.<sup>1</sup> He himself made repeated journeys to Greece in order, as it was then said, to labour for the re-union of the two Churches. This reconciliation is cited as the chief preoccupation of all those who cried up his doctrine. John of Parma spent several years amongst the Greeks, and at the close of his life wished to go and die amongst them.<sup>2</sup> The whole school of *The Eternal Gospel*, from Joachim to Telesphorus of Cosenza, at the end of the fourteenth century, proclaimed with one voice that the Oriental Church was the superior of the Latin Church; that it was better prepared for the renovation about to be accomplished; that it was through the succour of the Greeks that the reformers were to triumph over the carnal Church of the Latins, and that this reform was to be no other thing than the return to the *Spiritual Church* of the Greeks. Greece was the refuge of the *fraticelli* chased from Italy by Boniface VIII. Greece, at that time, appeared to be the ideal country to which the thoughts of all reformers turned. "Perhaps they were struck," says Fleury, "with some edifying remains of the ancient discipline which they witnessed there, above all, by the frugality and the penury of their bishops, so far removed from the pomp and temporal grandeur of the Latin bishops of that age."<sup>3</sup>

When we reflect that Greece was the home of Catharism,<sup>4</sup> the analogies of whose doctrines with *The Eternal Gospel* it is impossible not to recognise,

<sup>1</sup> Acta S. S. Maii, vol. vii. p. 91, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Salimbene, pp. 148-9, 297, 319.

<sup>3</sup> *Hist. Eccl.*, i. lxxxiv. No. 35.

<sup>4</sup> See the *History of the Cathari or Albigeois*, by M. C. Schmidt, of Strasburg (Geneva, 1848).



when we see, moreover, the school of *The Eternal Gospel* pursuing a path similar to that of Catharism, and almost identified with it, we are tempted to regard the former of those doctrines as an off-shoot of the second, engrafted not by direct affiliation but by secret and unavowed influences. Catharism seems thus to have reached the west by two routes, and to have determined, in the Middle Ages, two currents of parallel heresies, producing almost the same results, which were merged by discussion, and were arrested by the same means. These affinities become still more striking when we perceive contemporary authors ascribing to Amauri de Bene, in the first years of the thirteenth century, doctrines analogous to those of *The Eternal Gospel*.<sup>1</sup> The doctrines of Amauri themselves bear the strongest analogy to those of the heretics of Orleans of 1022. These latter, however, M. Schmidt does not hesitate to connect with the Cathari Church.<sup>2</sup>

Be this fact as it may, it is impossible to doubt that such ideas of reform did not respond to profound desiderata. Even after their condemnation, the Joachimite ideas continued for nearly a century to agitate men's minds. They survived especially in the south of France, where the writings of the sect were industriously copied and passed from hand to hand. In 1260, a council, called together at Arles by the same Florent who performed the functions of promoter to the commission of Anagni,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. I. M. Meyenberg *De pseudo-Evangelio Æterno*, §§ 2 and 3. St Antonine ascribes to Amauri doctrines so identical with those of *The Eternal Gospel*, that we are to suppose he speaks of him not from direct knowledge, but by inference merely, and according to what was the recognised type of all sects imbued with Catharism and mysticism.

<sup>2</sup> *History of the Cathari*, vol. i. p. 28; vol. ii. pp. 151, 287. See *Dom Bouquet*, vol. x. pp. 35, 536, etc.; *Cartulaire de St Pére de Chartres*, vol. i. p. 100, *et seq.*, and the introduction of M. Guérard, p. 219, *et seq.*

peremptorily condemned the partisans of the Joachimite *ternaires*, and those who declared the era of the Holy Spirit, the rule of the monks, the abolition of images, parables and sacraments to be at hand.<sup>1</sup> This same year, so long predicted as fatal, witnessed, in fact, the inauguration of many novelties, the foolish tentatives of Gérard Ségarelle and his apostles, and the first epidemic of the flagellants.<sup>2</sup> Never before had been witnessed such a deluge of prophecies of all kinds,<sup>3</sup> nor of so many mendicant sects.<sup>4</sup> The last writing of Guillaume de Saint-Amour, which dates from the same period, that book *De Antichrist* which appears to us so pronouncedly *parvenu*, under the anagram of Nicolas Oresmé,<sup>5</sup> is almost entirely devoted to the refutation of Joachimite errors, against which, some years previously, the energetic defender of the University had waged such a lively contest. Everywhere people were preoccupied with the future of the Church and its coming trials. "Some," says Guillaume, "declared with Abbot Joachim that a pacific era is about to commence with the advent of the Holy Spirit, and the appearance of a third Testament, when men shall be exclusively spiritual. Others, again,

<sup>1</sup> "Præsertim quum in partibus provinciarum quibus licet immeriti in parte præsidemus, jam plurimos etiam litteratos hujusmodi phantosiis intellexerimus eatenus occupatos et illectos ut plurima super iis commentaria facta descripserint, et, demanu ad manum dando circumferentes, ad externos transfuderint nationes." (Council Arles in 1260, in *Labbe's Work*, vol. xiv. col. 242.)

<sup>2</sup> Salimbene, pp. 123, 124, 228, 240; D'Argentré, *Coll. Jud.*, i. 367; *Hist. Litt. de la France*, vol. xxi. p. 477. *Vide* the fragment published by M. Boutaric in the *Notices et extra*, vol. xx. 2d part, pp. 235-37.

<sup>3</sup> Salimbene, pp. 234, 235, 265, *et seq.*, 284, 303, 308, *et seq.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 109, 124, 241, 242, 262, 330, 331, 371, 372, etc.

<sup>5</sup> See, in regard to this, M. V. Le Clerc's discussion (*Hist. Litt. de la France*, vol. xxi. p. 470, *et seq.*). The wish of Guillaume may be read in Martène and Durand's *Amplissima Collectio*, vol. ix. col. 1, 273, *et seq.*

struck with the refigidity of charity, and the evils which are more and more multiplying in the Church, announce for the last days the appearance of excellent preachers, who will animate faith; others, again, who promise to the Church many days of peace and prosperity, pretend that its old age will last as long as its former ages, and will in no wise be inferior to these. The inflexible rector of the University rejects all these consolatory hypotheses. His book is devoted to an exposition of the sombre theories of the Antichrist, to the horrors of the last persecution, and to the flood of errors which shall precede the Judgment. The cessation of the Roman Empire, by reason of the interregnum, the arrival of false missionaries (the mendicants), who shall invade the field of the true pastors, the blindness and the laxity of the prelates, the change in the office of the preachers, the false security in which the Church slumbers, the suspension of miracles, the progress of infidelity, the drying up of charity, and, above all, the promulgation of a new law which, as in previous instances, was to replace the Gospel, appeared to Guillaume as the certain signs of a near catastrophe. In this connection he inveighs with great force against Joachim and his disciples, against those ministers, not of the Holy Ghost, but of the Antichrist, who dare to assert that the *Mene, Tekel, Upharsin* have already been written upon the walls of the Church, that the sacraments of the Christian Church have come to an end, and that the Holy Ghost is still to come. Did not Joachim declare that, in about twelve hundred years after the incarnation of Christ, there would arise in Babylon a new chief a pontiff of the New Jerusalem; that is to say, of the Church in its third state? More than sixty years have rolled over since that prediction, and no one has appeared.<sup>1</sup> He is, then, only a false prophet.

<sup>1</sup> Col. 1333-84. In the *De Periculis Novissimorum Temporum*,

I should deviate from the plan I have laid down were I to attempt to follow the influence of *The Eternal Gospel* through the latter half of the thirteenth century, and the first half of the fourteenth.<sup>1</sup> If it were given to us to write that history, we should show that the Franciscan and Joachimite ideas inspired for nearly a century longer a multitude of enthusiastic souls; we should almost assist at its triumph, when the papacy had fallen into the hands of the feeble Peter Celestine; we should see the firm successor of that pious and incapable dotard, Boniface VIII., energetically rescind the concessions of his predecessor, and the hatred of the *fraticelli* inspire the bitter satires of Fra Jacopone, and powerfully contribute to the reputation which that pontiff left behind him.<sup>2</sup> About the same time a fanatical monk, Pierre Jean d'Olive, took up in the south of France the most subversive doctrines of Gérard de San-Donnino,<sup>3</sup> that the renovation of the world was about to take place, and that it was to be effected by

p. 38, Guillaume, expressing a similar thought, says fifty-five years, which places the composition of the *De Antichristo* about five years after the *De Periculis*.

<sup>1</sup> One of the most curious works written under the influence of the Joachimite philosophy is the treatise of Christian symbolism written by Jacques de Carreto, and contained in No. 124 of the St Germain collection. I instance this singular work to some young paleographer.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* Dom Luigi Tosti's *Storia di Bonifazio VIII.*, i. pp. 883, *et seq.*, 188, *et seq.* The Joachimite prophecies respecting this pope are overflowing with hatred; "Ecce l'huomo della progenie di Scarioto. . . Neronicamente regnando, tu morirai sconcolato. Perchè tanto desideri il babilonico principato?"

<sup>3</sup> Gui de Perpignan, in his *Summa de Hæresibus*, expressly identifies Joachim's errors with those of Pierre-Jean. *Vide* the pieces published by Father Jeiler in the *Historisches Jahrbuch des Görres-Gesellschaft*, iii. pp. 648-59, and by Father Zingliara in his *De Mente Concilii Viennensis in Definiendo Dogmate Unionis Animæ Humanæ cum Corpore* (Rome, 1878), p. 106, *et seq.* Compare *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, vol. vi. (1883), pp. 132-3.

observing to the letter the rule of Saint Francis: that, in like manner, as the crucifixion of Christ had opened a new era, so the moment of the stigmatisation of Saint Francis had put an end to the carnal Church, and marked the commencement of an age when evangelical life should be fully practised: that it was by the virtue and labours of the minor friars that the conversion of the infidels, the Jews, and the Greek Church, which was destined to supersede the carnal Church of the Latins, was to be effected: that the rule of Saint Francis being indeed the evangelical law, it was not surprising that it was persecuted by the carnal Church, just as the Gospel was by the law of the synagogue: that it was necessary that the carnal Church, in order to fill up the measure of its crimes, should condemn the rule of Saint Francis: that from thence this law, more favourably received by the Greeks, the Jews, the Saracens, the Tartars than by the Latins, should return with these fresh auxiliaries to crush Rome, who was unwilling to accept it, that that Church, commonly called, universal, catholic, and militant, was the impure Babylon, the great harlot, given up to simony, to pride, to all manner of vices, and finally to hell, just as the haughty Vashti was repudiated, and the humble Esther crowned. The carnal Church should henceforth be withered up, devoured by the consuming hatred it had vowed against the doctrine of the saints.

Again, we should see around Pierre Jean d'Olive a crowd of men, filled with an ardent and pure zeal, preaching more emphatically than ever the reform of the world through poverty, and their memory suspended between canonisation and anathema, according as the admiration excited by their noble character or the horror by their timidity prevailed: heretics in the eyes of some, saints who had wrought



miracles in that of others. Bernard Délicieux, the pronounced enemy of the inquisition, is an ardent Joachimite.<sup>1</sup> The same pretensions discovered by Ulbertin de Casal, Fra Dolcino, Michel de Césène, acquire an altogether political and special importance by the alliance of the exalted party of the Order of Saint Francis with Louis of Bavaria. Once more, we should see the question of poverty dividing the Christian world, kindling the piles, creating an anti-pope: we should see a general of the minor friars, Michel de Césène,<sup>2</sup> defending Franciscan ideas against the papacy, and seeking succour, outside of the Church, against the Church, which condemned him. The third order of Saint Francis would appear to us as the principal centre whence emanated these half religions, half laic sects whose ambition alarmed the Church and civil society: Béguins and Béguines, Fratricelles, Frerots, Bizoques (Binzocchieri, Frères bis, Bisets) *Barbozate*, Frères pyes, Frères agaches, Frères aux sacs, Frères de la pauvre vie, Flagellants, Lollards, Apostolical brethren, apostles even (for they went the length of giving themselves that name), with whom the appearance of apocryphal Messiahs and pretended incarnations of the Holy Spirit correspond, such as Gonzalve of Cuença.<sup>3</sup>

That some bold and popular idea was concealed under these monastic exteriors is a matter which does not admit of any doubt: the rather, when we hear all the above designated sectarians declaring unanimously that they recognise but one God; that

<sup>1</sup> Hauréau, *Bernard Délicieux* (Paris, 1877), pp. 151-55.

<sup>2</sup> Michel de Césène's doctrines were verbatim, those of Joachim, as interpreted by John of Parma and Gérard de Sandonnino. *Vide* Baluze's *Miscell.*, vol. i. p. 272, *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Direct-inq.*, p. 200; D'Argentré, i. p. 176; Fleury, Book xci. secs. 42, 59, 60; xcvi. sec. 36; Tosti, *op. cit.*, i. p. 185, *et seq.*; Schmidt, *Histoire des Cathares*, passim; and above all Gui de Perpignan's *Summa de Haresibus* (Paris, 1528, folio).

they are not subject to any obedience ; that they imitate the life of Christ and the apostles ; and that the whole authority of the Roman Church—that Church doomed on account of the malice of the cardinals and the prelates—has passed to the people. The conventual habit, in the Middle Ages,<sup>1</sup> was often only a safe permit, a guarantee of inviolability ; often, too, a pretext for vagabondage, as is proved by the innumerable decrees of the provincial councils against the monks and vagrant scholars carrying unduly the religious vestments. The habit of Saint Francis, bordering upon that of the beggar, was used thus in Italy and in the south of France as a blind for dangerous popular associations ; for those condemning work, elevating mendicity to the plain of duty, proclaiming that perfection consisted in going naked ; that prayer was only efficacious when it was made by a person naked ; full of declamation and rage against wealth and men of the world ; others declaring that they alone had the right to cause the Holy Spirit to descend by the imposition of hands, that one could not be saved outside of their order, that the prelates of the carnal Church only merited contempt, that all the popes since Saint Sylvester had been nothing but seducers, with the exception of Pierre Celestine, that no excommunication could reach them, seeing that the rule of Saint Francis was superior to the pope and to the Church. The Order of Saint Francis, as a body, had assuredly the right to repudiate the responsibility of these extravagances ; nevertheless, the presumption of the bonds of parentage between the divers families of religious mendicants rested upon a real foundation. The same confusion took place in respect of the Cathari, who, from the length of their vestments and their austere behaviour, were often ranked amongst the friars of the third order, under the pseudonyms of “ Bons-

<sup>1</sup> *Direct-inq.*, p. 201, *et seq.*

hommes" and "Cagots." If we examine the registers of the Inquisition of Toulouse and Carcassonne,<sup>1</sup> it is not without astonishment we see there that all the condemned of the formidable tribunal were friars of the third Order, or Beguins. Outward appearances, and frequently indications even more slight, determined these inquisitors, who sent to the stake poor unfortunates suspected of Catharism, solely on account of the pallor of their countenances: *audierat enim eos solo pallore notare hæreticos, quasi quos pallore constaret, hæreticos esse certum esset.*<sup>2</sup>

We could not, until after running through the original documents we have just cited, represent to ourselves the importance which such secret and vagabond societies had acquired in the south of France. The corruption of the clergy provoked these reprisals, which were worse than the evil itself. Indeed, it is remarkable that all the authors of the times who have really transmitted to us the echo of public opinion, wholly sympathised with the Beguins and the Cathari. These are the saints, while the orthodox priests are the heretics.<sup>3</sup> The same feeling was exhibited in a not less striking manner in Lombardy. Milan, in particular, had become a formidable centre of hostility against the Church. There, Catharism was openly professed. In 1280, the Begunie Guillelmina represented herself as

<sup>1</sup> Ph. de Limborch, *Hist. Inquis.*, cui subjungitur liber sententiarum Inquis. Tolosanæ ab anno 1307 ad 1323 (Amsterdam, 1692). Baluze's *Miscell.*, vol. i. p. 213, *et seq.* *MSS. of St Germain*, Nos. 395, 396 (*Acts of the Toulouse Inquisition* from 1285 to 1304, unpublished), and several other pieces of the Doat collection. Compare (ancient collection) No. 6193. Study *Bernard Délicieux's Trial* (Hauréau, *op. cit.*). The Minerva library at Rome is in possession of many like documents. See chiefly the Extracts from Bernard Gui's *Practica*, in Molinier's *L'Inquisition dans le Midi de la France*, pp. 230, 231.

<sup>2</sup> "Gesta episcoporum Leodiensium," in Martène and Durand's *Ampliss. Collectio*, vol. iv. col. 901.

<sup>3</sup> See C. Schmidt, *Hist. des Cathares*, vol. i. p. 189.

the Holy Ghost, and after her death miracles were wrought over her tomb. Amidst the extreme complication of the struggles of the time, it is moreover very difficult always to trace with certainty the divisions of the different parties. Alliances were often formed between contrary parties. Thus we see the Cathari openly protected by the Ghibellenes, and the exalted Franciscan party allied more than once with the emperor against the pope.

But neither these deceptive alliances, nor any of the stratagems by which the sectaries sought to mislead the authorities, sufficed to protect them. The Roman Church, seconded by an Order better disciplined than that of Saint Francis, did not cease to pursue the popular associations which sprang from the rule of Assisi. On the one hand, she attempted to regulate the conduct of the inoffensive portions of these devout groups; on the other, she made against the seditious parties a terrible war of imprisonment and fire. She burned by the thousands the friars of the Third Order and the Beguins in the north of Italy, in the south of France, in Flanders and in Germany, whilst in other parts these were regarded as saints, and their adepts attained to the honours of popular canonisation. The same contradictions appear in historical texts as to the character of their lives and their morals. Here they are represented as being indolent, delighting in vagabondage and mendicity, and given up to the most ignoble depravity; there, as industrious associations, existing by their labour, and distinguished by great purity of manners. It is probable that, according to the different countries in which they lived, and the divers names which these associations received, such judgments were founded on truth. These poor folks had only in common a habit analogous to that of the religious mendicants, an austere and devout mien which made them beloved

of the people, rendered them suspicious to the Church people, and made them the butts of the wits and the people of quality.

The Middle Ages, applying the name of *heresy* to every deviation from the rule laid down by the Church, this epithet could not fail of being applied to them. This term must not lead us to suppose that they had always a covert doctrine and a fixed creed. Sometimes, no doubt, Catharist ideas, and more frequently still the ideas of *The Eternal Gospel* were concealed under the habits of the monks; but most often their heresy was nothing more than the dangerous or suspicious character of their manner of living. After the middle of the fourteenth century, these associations became only pious fraternities, subject to and ruled by the Church: and it is thus that they continue to this day in Belgium, Italy, and in the south of France. The ideas of reform, which they at first embraced, being persistently narrowed by the official Church, the Universities, and by laic society, was thus stifled or limited to a small number of adepts, who were rendered powerless by the dominant spirit of their order and of the age.

These aspirations towards an unknown religious future reappeared, however, at intervals, up to a very recent period, if not up to the present day. The deplorable spectacle which papacy presented at the end of the fourteenth century, and at the commencement of the fifteenth, excited a fresh religious enthusiasm. Jean de Rochetaillade, the Avignon prophet, sometimes rivalled Joachim himself in his severity against the high clergy, and in his Christian boldness.<sup>1</sup> A hermit of Calabria, Telesphorus or Theolosphorus, of Cosenza, endeavoured to revive the name and authority of his

<sup>1</sup> D'Argentré's *Coll. Jud.* i. pp. 374-76. Fleury, Book xevi. sec. 33.



countryman Joachim.<sup>1</sup> On the morning of Easter, 1386, while he was grieving over the misfortune of the great schism and the decline of the Church, an angel appeared unto him and commanded him to read the prophecies of Cyrillus and Joachim, announcing to him at the same time that he would there find the prediction of the present evils, together with the end for which God had reserved them. Telesphorus hastened to collect the prophecies of Joachim, which he found scattered about the monasteries of Calabria, and wrote a book in order to apply them to the age. He essayed to demonstrate, by means of those mysterious oracles, that the Roman Church was on the eve of being exterminated by the Greeks, Saracens and Tartars, instruments of the divine wrath, who would purify it by stripping it of its temporal goods which had corrupted it: that, in lieu of the false pontiff, there would appear an angelic pastor, who, uniting his forces to those of the emperor, would cause *The Eternal Gospel* to flourish throughout the whole earth.<sup>2</sup> This was the reign of the Holy Ghost, the age of perfection and of goodness, in which the schisms and scandals that had affected the Church in past centuries would disappear. Knowledge, then, was to be for all, for the contemplative life would be open to all, and there would be no need of the ministry of the doctors. The Greeks and the Jews, which the evangelical law had not been able to assimilate, would be converted,

<sup>1</sup> Acta S. S. Maii, vol. vii. pp. 139-140. Meyenberg *De pseudo-Evangelio Æterno*, p. 21, et seq.; *Hist. Litt. de la France*, vol. xxv. p. 257. Laporte du Theil's *Extracts*, vol. ix. p. 100 (No. 1108 Ottobonien).

<sup>2</sup> "Insurget sanctissima et novo religio, quæ erit libera et spiritualis, in qua Romanus Pontifex dominabitur spiritualiter in omni gente a mari usque ad mare. Erit autem illud in tempore vel circa tempus persecutionis Babylonis novæ, id est Romæ, tempore angelici Pastoris, quando afflicta nimis ecclesia liberabitur a jugo servitutis illius."

and would surpass in their turn in holiness and in fervour the ancient Latin people. This was, we see, a reproduction, pure and simple, of the dreams of Joachim, John of Parma, and of Pierre-Jean d'Olive.

In 1388 these ideas were again preached at Paris by one Thomas de Puglia, who, like thousands of others, announced the advent of the reign of the Holy Ghost, the end of the domination of the prelacy, and proclaimed the inutility of the sacraments. The Bishop of Paris, Pierre d'Ougemont, delivered him over to the secular arm; but from the reign of Charles V., good sense had made its influence felt in the world. The doctors pronounced him a lunatic, and his book only was burned.<sup>1</sup> Guillaume de Helder-  
nissem and "the intellectual brotherhood" resuscitated the same doctrines in the Flemish country about 1411.<sup>2</sup> They found in Pierre d'Ailly, then Bishop of Cambrai, another Guillaume de Saint-Amour: I mean a zealous guardian of the Gallican tradition, a tradition essentially episcopal, and always opposed to the sectarial and conventual spirit.

The sixteenth century witnessed more than once the resuscitation of the same dreams.<sup>3</sup> It is very remarkable that, according to the first authors of reform, Joachim was an auxiliary. His apocryphal works were read with avidity by Protestant publicists, eager to discover their ancestors. J. Wolf, in particular, in the compilation which he entitled, *Lectio-num Memorabilium et Reconditarum Centenarii XVI.* (Lauingen, 1600), collected all the passages of Joachim and of the Joachimites which favoured the doctrines or the antipathies of his co-religion-

<sup>1</sup> D'Argentré, *Coll. Jud.*, i. 2d part, p. 151.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* i. 2d part, p. 207.

<sup>3</sup> See on this point the monograph of Meyenberg, already cited several times.

ists.<sup>1</sup> It would be impossible to imagine a more fantastical conglomeration of maledictions. Those who regard the Middle Ages as an epoch of perfect submission to the Church would be surprised at the implacable hostility and concentrated fury of the tone employed.

We will not inquire whether, in our days, Joachim

<sup>1</sup> Here are several of the curious passages. (*Wolf*, i. p. 488, *et seq.* Most of them I have verified and found correct.

“Nullus populorum legitur ad tantam amaritudinem perduxisse Romanam Ecclesiam sicut domesticus Alemannus.—Videat Ecclesiam si, de acceptandis et improbandis electionibus principum, confusionis maculam non incurrit: qui tangit picem inquinatur ab ea; qui communicat superbo induet superbiam. Intra Ecclesiam Romanam sunt mercenarii plurimi non pastores qui etiam bestię dicuntur a vastando, dracones a saeviendo, struthiones a simulando, sirenæ a luxuriando pilosi a propinquos amando. Transcendit Papale prætorium cunctas curias in calumniosis litibus et quæstibus extorquendis.—Ad Petrum dictum fuit: quum senueris, alius te cinget et ducet quo tu non vis.—Quid dicam de summo pontifice Aarone, qui modernos præules representat; qui ad instantiam populi qui egressus fuerat de Ægypto vitulum conflavit sculptile, quod totum ad librum Decretalium referendum est, in quo omnis dolus et calumnia perseverat: ac per hoc curia Sedis Petri nullum pontificat qui hujus simulacra non adorat. Quod Deus minus puniet laicos quam clericos et prætatos, quia minus voluntatem Dei cognoverunt. Quod principes alemannorum jura temporalia executient at Ecclesia Romana.—Quod Ecclesiaprius confundenda et spolianda et prædanda ac captivanda est ab Imperio.—Quod Ecclesia putabit ut Imperium alemannorum et regnum Franciæ sibi favorem impenderent et a cunctis molestiis eam liberarent, sed nihil ab eis habebit prosperum.—Quod auctor usque modo prohibitus est revelare et denudare ignominiam matris suæ Ecclesiæ sed nunc cogitur prodere ejus iniquitates. Ait enim. Pudorem mihi ingero, quia meæ matris pudenda denudo.—Quod oppressi ab ecclesiasticis damant ad Deum dicentes: O Deus quosque non vindicas sanguinem innocentum sub altari clamantium.—Quod Ecclesia Latina et Romana graviora quam Græca passura est in proximo, quia nequiora commisit.—Quod ipsi prælati et Ecclesia carnalis erubescere deferent ad redargutionem virorum spiritualium et doctorum et a culpa desistere. Sed quia factus est eis frontis meretricis et induruit malitia, nolunt erubescere.—Quod apprehendendus est Petrus, scilicet Summus Pontifex, et ligandus,” etc.

might still claim any legitimate posterity.<sup>1</sup> In order to preserve the precise sense of the terms Eternal Gospel, we believe that they ought to be limited to the first phase of that vast movement, whose centre was the order of Saint Francis, and which originated some curious popular aberrations. Such as it is, in spite of its shortcomings and its ill success, this tentative is not any the less the most daring attempt at religious creation of which modern centuries offer an example; and it may be said that it might have changed the face of the world if all the disciplined and reflective forces of the thirteenth century had not suddenly arrested it. The Roman Church, the University of Paris, the Order of Saint Dominic, the civil power, so often enemies, were found to be leagued against pretensions which would, at the very least, have changed the fundamental conditions of human society. The atrocious means employed to extinguish these strange doctrines revolt us: a great many laudable aspirations were included in the condemnation which overtook them: we may say, nevertheless, that true progress did not result from the labours of these well-meaning sectaries. It was a similar movement to this which carried the human mind in the direction of science, political reforms, and the definitive constitution of civil society. As early as 1255, it can be discovered that progress, just as we hear it said in modern society, comes from on high and not from below, from reason, and not from imagination, from good sense, and not from enthusiasm, from sensible men, and not from illuminati who seek in chimerical approximations for the secrets of destiny. True it is that the thinker can only respectfully salute the man who, permeated with a high idea of human life, pro-

<sup>1</sup> We must not forget the beautiful romance *Spiri Dion*, in which Joachim's figure was skilfully drawn and introduced into the picture with marvellous art. On this point Madame Sand owed a great deal to M. Pierre Leroux.

tests against the inherent imperfection of every social state, and dreams of some ideal law which will conform to the needs of his heart; but any number of efforts cannot overstep the limits of the possible. The world is the result of causes too complicated to permit of its being confined to any absolute system. No creed can ever express the progress of humanity in the past, still less embrace the rule of its future.



## MARCUS-AURELIUS.

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IT is the glory of sovereignty that two models of irreproachable virtue are to be found in its ranks, and that the most beautiful lessons of patience and disinterestedness could proceed from a condition which we may suppose was unreservedly exposed to all the seductions of pleasure and vanity. The throne sometimes is an aid to virtue; and Marcus-Aurelius certainly would not have been what he was if it had not been that he exercised supreme power. It is the faculties which such an exceptional position alone puts into exercise, alongside of the reality, which make it appear to better advantage. It is disadvantageous to fame when the sovereign, the servant of all, cannot allow his genius to have free scope; but such a situation, when there is brought to bear on it an elevated soul, is very favourable to the development of the individual genius and talent which constitute the moralist. The sovereign really worthy of the name observes humanity from his exalted position in the most complete manner. His point of view resembles that of the philosophical historian—that which results from those sweeping glances cast over our poor species; it is a sweet sentiment mixed with resignation, piety and hope. The cold severity of an artist cannot belong to a sovereign. The first condition of art is freedom; but the sovereign, subjected as he is to the prejudices of middle-class

society, is the least free of men. He has not the right to his own opinions; he has hardly any right to his own tastes. A crowned Goethe even could not avow that royal disdain for bourgeois ideas, that haughty indifference to practical results, which are the essential characteristics of the artist; but one can imagine the mind of a good sovereign like that of a sympathetic Goethe, a Goethe converted to the good, brought to see that there is something greater than art, led to estimate men by the habitual nobleness of his thoughts and by the feeling of his own happiness.

Such were these two admirable sovereigns, Antoninus the Pious and Marcus-Aurelius, at the head of the greatest empire that ever existed. History only presents another example of this heredity of wisdom upon the throne, in the persons of the three great Mogul emperors, Baber, Humaïoun, Akbar, the latter of whom shows, when compared with Marcus-Aurelius, some traits of striking resemblance. The salutary principle of adoption had made of the imperial court, in the second century, a true nursery of virtue. The noble and learned Nerva, in establishing that principle, assured the happiness of the human species for nearly three hundred years, and gave to the world the most beautiful century of progress which has been conserved by the memory of man.

It is Marcus-Aurelius himself who has sketched for us in the first book of his *Thoughts* this latter admirable plan, in which we see moving, in a celestial light, the noble and pure features of his father, mother, ancestors and masters. Thanks to him, we can comprehend what the old Roman families, who had witnessed the reign of the bad emperors, guarded still of honesty, dignity, right, the civil spirit, and, if I may say so, republican. People lived there in the admiration of Cato, of

Brutus, of Thræseas, and of the great Stoics, whose souls had not been subjugated by tyranny. The reign of Domitian was there abhorred. The sages who opposed him without flinching were honoured as heroes. The advent of the Antonines was only the succession to power of the society whose just colours Tacitus has handed down to us, a society of sages brought into existence by the league of all those who had revolted against the despotism of the first Cæsars.

Neither the oriental pomps of some oriental royalties, founded upon the baseness and the stupidity of men, nor the pedantic pride of the royalties of the middle ages, founded upon an exaggerated sentiment of heredity, and upon the simple faith of the Germanic races in the rights of blood, can give us an idea of this wholly republican sovereignty of Nerva, of Trajan, of Hadrian, of Antoninus, and of Marcus-Aurelius. There was nothing of the hereditary prince or of right divine; none of the military captain; it was a kind of grand civil magistrature, with nothing which resembled a court, nor which stripped the emperor of his individual character. Marcus-Aurelius was neither little nor much of a king in the proper sense of the term; his fortune was immense, but consisted wholly of patrimony; his aversion to the Cæsars (the emperors before Nerva), whom he regarded as a species of Sardanapalus, magnificent, debauched and cruel, appeared at every minute of his life. The civility of his manners was perfection; he gave back to the Senate the whole of its ancient importance; when he was at Rome he never missed a sitting, nor quitted his place until the Consul had pronounced the formula: *Nihil vos moramur, Patres conscripti.*

The sovereignty thus possessed in common by a group of the *élite* of men, which bound them

together or separated them, according to the exigencies of the moment, lost a part of that attraction which renders it so dangerous. One reached the throne without having to canvass for it, but also without owing it to birth or to a kind of abstract right; one attained to it undeceived, wearied of men, prepared by long authority. The empire was a burden, which one accepted when one's hour came, without one's dreaming of precipitating that hour. Marcus-Aurelius was designated for it so young that his idea of reigning had hardly any commencement, and did not exercise over his mind a moment's seduction. At eight years old, when he was already præsul of the Salic priests, Hadrian remarked this brooding, sweet child, and loved him for his good nature, his docility, and his incapacity to lie. At ten years old, the empire was assured to him. He waited patiently for it for twenty-two years. The evening on which Antoninus felt himself to be dying, and caused to be carried into his chamber the statue of Fortune, had for him neither surprise nor joy. He had for a long time been surfeited by the joys which he had never tasted; he had, by reason of the profoundness of his philosophy, perceived their absolute vanity.

His youth had been tranquil and pleasant, divided between the pleasures of the country, exercises in Latin rhetoric in the slightly frivolous manner of his master Fronto, and philosophical meditations. Greek pedagogy had attained its perfection, and, as happens in these sort of things, perfection was approaching decadence. The lettered men and the philosophers were divided in opinion, and were engaged in ardent combat. The rhetoricians dreamed only of affected ornaments of discourse; philosophers favoured almost baldness and negligence of expression. In spite of his

friendship for Fronto, and his adjurations against the latter, Marcus-Aurelius was soon an adept in philosophy. Junius Rusticus became his favourite master, and won him wholly over to the severe discipline which he opposed to the ostentation of the rhetoricians. Rusticus continued to be the confidant and the intimate counsellor of his august pupil, who acknowledged having received from him his taste for a simple style, for a demeanour noble and serious, not to mention a still superior benefit, to wit: "I am indebted to him for my knowledge of the 'Conversations of Epictetus,' which he lent me from his own library." Claudius Severus, the peripatetic, laboured to the same end, and ultimately led young Marcus to philosophy. Marcus had a habit of calling him his brother, and appeared to have had for him a deep attachment.

Philosophy was at that time a kind of religious profession, implying mortification and rules almost monastic. From the age of twelve Marcus assumed the philosophic mantle, learned to sleep upon a hard bed, and to practise all the austerities of ascetic stoicism. It required his mother on several occasions to induce him to spread a few skins upon his couch. His health was more than once affected by this excessive rigour. But that did not prevent him from presiding at feasts, or from fulfilling his duties as a youthful prince, with that affable air which in him was the result of the greatest disinterestedness.

His hours were as strict as those of a religious recluse. In spite of his feeble health, he could, thanks to the sobriety of his *régime* and to the strictness of his morals, lead a life of labour and fatigue. He had not what is called *esprit*, and he had very little passion. *Esprit* rarely succeeds apart from a certain amount of malignity. It is accustomed to do this by turns which are neither



wholly good-natured nor troublesome. Marcus understood nothing perfectly—except duty. What he lacked was the kissing of a fairy at his birth, a thing quite philosophical in its way; I mean the art of unbending to nature and to gaiety, which teaches that *abstinence and sustenance* are not everything, and that life might as well be summed up in “laughter and mirth.”

In every art he had for masters the most eminent professors. Claudius Severus instructed him in peripateticism; Appollonius of Chalcis was brought expressly from the East by Antoninus to take charge of his adopted son, who appears to have been a perfect preceptor; Sextus of Cheronea, the nephew of Plutarch, the accomplished stoic; Diognetus, who trained him to love asceticism; Claudius Maximus, always brimful of fine sentences; Alexander of Cotyus, who taught him Greek; Herodus Atticus, who recited to him the ancient harangues of Athens. His exterior was that of his masters themselves; habits simple and modest, beard almost neglected, body attenuated and reduced to a shadow, eyes twitching with hard labour. No study, not even that of painting, was strange to him. With Greek he was familiar; when he reflected on philosophical subjects he thought in that language; but his solid mind discovered the folly of literary exercises, in which Hellenic education was lost; his Greek style, though correct, has something artificial, which smells of the midnight oil. Morality was to him the last word of existence, and he brought to bear on it constant application.

How did these respectable pedagogues, none of them of any consequence, succeed in forming such a man? This is a question which one asks oneself with some surprise. To judge of it by the ordinary analogies, it had all the appearance that an education so overdone would turn out to be the very

worst. But to speak the truth, Marcus, superior to all these masters who had been selected from every corner of the globe, had a single master whom he revered above them all; and that was Antoninus. The moral value of the man is in proportion to his faculty of admiration. It was because Marcus-Aurelius had by his side the most beautiful model of a perfect life, and one whom he understood and loved, that he became what he was.

Beware of "Cæsarising" or losing your true colour; that approaches. Preserve thyself simple, good, pure, grave, the enemy of pomp, the friend of justice and religion, benevolent, human, firm in the practice of duties. Make every effort to remain such as philosophy would have thee do; revere the gods, watch the preservation of men. Life is short, the only fruit of earthly life is to maintain one's soul in a holy frame, to do actions useful to society. Act always like a disciple of Antoninus; recall to thyself his constancy in the accomplishments of the prescriptions of reason, the equanimity of his disposition in all situations, his holiness, his serenity of countenance, his extreme gentleness, his contempt for vain-glory, his determination to penetrate the meaning of things; how he never allowed anything to pass before he had examined and well understood it; how he bore unjust reproaches without recriminating; how he did nothing with precipitation; how he would not listen to detractors; how carefully he studied character and action; neither spiteful nor fastidious, nor suspicious, nor sophistical: content with so little as to house, sleep, garments, food, service; laborious, patient, sober, so much so that he could occupy himself till night in the same business without having to leave for his necessary wants, except at the usual hours. And that friendship always constant, equable, and that goodness in supporting contradiction, and that joy in receiving counsel better than his own: and that piety without superstition! Think of these things, so that the last hour may find thee like him, with a consciousness of good accomplished.

The consequence of this austere philosophy might have produced stiffness and severity. But here it was that the rare goodness of the nature of Marcus-Aurelius shone out in all its brilliancy. His severity was confined only to himself. The

fruit of this great tension of mind is inexhaustible benevolence. His whole life was a study of how to render good for evil. After some sad experience of human perversity, he can only contrive in the evening to note down the following: "If thou canst do it, correct them; in the contrary case, remember thou how thou must act towards those who had bestowed kindness on thee. The gods themselves are benevolent to these creatures; they aid them (so great is their bounty!), bestow on them health, riches, and glory; to thee it is permitted to do as the gods." Another day men were very wicked; for here is what he writes on his tablets: "Such is the order of nature: some men of that sort must, of necessity, act thus. To wish that it be otherwise is to wish that the fig-tree should produce no figs. Remember thou, in a word, this: In a very short time thou and he will die; soon after, your names will be remembered no more." These reflections on universal forgiveness recur continually.

It is on rare occasions that he mixes with that superlative kindness an imperceptible smile. "The best way to revenge oneself on the wicked is not to render them like for like," or, with a soft emphasis of pride: "It is a royal thing, when one does good, to remember the evil that is in himself." One day he has to reproach himself: "Thou hast forgotten that this holy relationship reunites each man with the human species; a relationship not of blood and of birth, but a participation in the same intelligence. Thou hast forgotten that the reasonable soul of each person is a god, a thing derived from the Supreme Being."

In the business of life he must have been exquisite, though, no doubt, a little simple, like the majority of men who are very good. He was sincerely humble, without hypocrisy, make-believe,

or studied deceit. One of the maxims of the excellent emperor was that the wicked are unhappy, that one is wicked only in spite of himself and through ignorance; he grieves for those who are not like himself; he did not believe in the right of imposing on them.

He perceived clearly the baseness of men, but he did not avow it. This habit of blinding oneself willingly was the defect of the hearts of the *élite*. The world not being such as they would wish it, they deceived themselves in order to see it otherwise than it was. Hence he was a little lenient in his judgments. With Marcus-Aurelius, this pliability produces in us sometimes a cause of irritation. If we were to believe him, his masters, several of whom were mediocre enough, must have been without exception superior men. We should have to admit that everybody about him was virtuous. It is at such a point as this that we are compelled to ask if that brother, upon whom he has made so great an eulogium in his acts of thanks to the gods, was not his brother by adoption, the debauched Lucius Verus. It is certain that the good emperor was capable of gross illusions when the matter in hand was the rendering to others their proper meed of virtue.

No person of sense will deny that his was a great soul. But had he a great mind? Yes; since he saw into the infinite depths of duty and of conscience. He lacked decision only in one point. He never dared deny absolutely the supernatural. We certainly can share his dread of atheism; we understand perfectly what he meant when he speaks to us of his horror of a world without God and without Providence. But that which we little comprehend is when he speaks to us seriously of the gods intervening in human affairs through the will of particular persons. The meagreness of his scientific

education can alone explain such weakness. To protect himself from vulgar errors, he had neither the nimbleness of Hadrian nor the adroitness of Lucian. But it must be added that these errors were in him of no consequence. The supernatural was not the basis of his piety. His religion was limited to some medical superstitions, and to a patriotic condescension for old usages. The initiations of Eleusis did not appear to have occupied a large place in his moral life. His virtue, like that of the present day, rested on reason and upon nature. Saint Louis was a very virtuous man, and, according to the ideas of his time, a very good sovereign, because he was a Christian. Marcus-Aurelius was the most pious of men, not because he was a Pagan, but because he was an accomplished man. He was the embodiment of human nature, and not of a fixed religion. Whatever may be the religious and philosophical revolutions of the future, his grandeur will not suffer any reproach, for it rests entirely upon that which can never perish—upon excellence of heart.









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